

‘THE KINGDOM AND THE SULTANATE WERE CONJOINED’:
LEGITIMIZING LAND AND POWER IN ARMENIA DURING THE
12TH AND EARLY 13TH CENTURIES*

by

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The expansionist policy implemented by the Byzantine empire in the late tenth and eleventh centuries brought the Armenian kingdoms of the Bagratuni and the Arcruni to an end by 1065 and the annexation of their lands by the empire.¹ These territorial gains, however, were subsequently lost to the Seljuq sultanate and affiliated Turkish and Kurdish polities. The king of Georgia, Davit‘ II, known as ‘the Builder’ (ადმაშენებელი, 1089-1125), inaugurated a period of Georgian military expansion and conflict against the Islamic dynasties that had established themselves in the area in the final quarter of the eleventh century. By 1210, the Georgian kingdom had succeeded in conquering and holding the Armenian lands between the Kur and Araxes rivers.

The territory conquered by the Georgian kingdom had experienced significant changes between the period of the annexations and the Georgian expansion. Forced and voluntary migrations had nearly eradicated the old rural-based political elite, while urbanization in certain areas had resulted in the rise of urban notables. An influx of mainly Turkish and Kurdish Muslims had contributed to the alteration of the region’s demography;

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¹ On Byzantine expansion into Armenia see BARTIKIAN 1971.

and the removal of the Armenian Church hierarchy to Syria and eventually to Cilicia, had weakened traditional cultural institutions. This article contends that in the wake of such social and political disruptions, new forms of land tenure and administration — ones which were intelligible in both a Christian Caucasian and an Islamic Turco-Persian context — evolved in these territories and emerged under Georgian rule. Alongside these land policies that provided a degree of economic stability to the region, shared notions of political legitimacy fostered a sense of political continuity during a time of rapid regime change. I shall focus on the rise and rule of the Mhargrjeli family² in the Georgian kingdom to illustrate the emergence of a new political elite and its implementation of recognized regional economic and political norms in the Armenian territories to legitimize and secure their conquests.

I. THE DETERIORATION OF LAND TENURE

The inalienable possession of hereditary prerogatives, offices, and land constituted the basis of the ancient dynastic social system of Armenia known as the *naxararut'wn*, and contributed to the decentralized nature of the Arsacid kingdom.³ In a recent article, N. Garsoïan has traced the evolution of that system during the period after the fall of the Arsacid monarchy in Persarmenia in 428 through the ninth century.⁴ She observes that the integrity of this system deteriorated during the Abbāsid domination of Armenia through the consolidation of the lands of the many dynastic families in the hands of three main families: the Bagratuni, Arcruni, and Siwni.⁵ As a result, many of the noble houses disappeared and/or were

² The family is referred to as the Mhargrjeli (მჰარგრძელი; Arm. *Մխարგრძელი*/Mxargrceli) in Georgian sources and contemporary inscriptions and as the Zak'arean (*Հաքարեան*) in later Armenian historiography. The earliest reference to the family as Zak'arean, to my knowledge, occurs in Vardan Arevelc'i's *Historical Compilation*, VA, 127 [=VA-t, 206]. In neither Zak'arē's nor Iwanē's inscriptions, however, is that surname employed. I have therefore decided to refer to the brothers by the moniker Mhargrjeli attributed to them by the *K'art'lis C'xovreba* as well as used by them in their inscriptions, cf. Zak'arē's inscription on his church at Ani, DHV I, 58 (172).

³ The classic studies on the Armenian society during the period of the Arsacid kingdom are those of ADONTZ 1970 and MANANDYAN 1934; see also TOUMANOFF 1963, and GARSOÏAN 1976.

⁴ GARSOÏAN 2012. I extend my gratitude to Prof. Garsoïan for kindly sending me a copy of her article prior to publication.

⁵ Caliph Harūn al-Rāshid (reg. 786-809) further inaugurated a policy of settling Muslim colonists within Armenia that split Armenian lands apart and weakened territorial integrity; on the Arab settlement of Armenia in general, see TER-GHEWONDYAN 1976.

subsumed within these families. Coincidental with this process of centralization, there occurred a discernible change in the practice of the inheritance of real property. Rather than maintaining the integrity of the houses' possession through the bestowal of property to a single custodian — the head of the family — lands were now divided among siblings.⁶ Finally, with the establishment of the Bagratuni kingdom towards the end of the ninth century, the sources suggest that the monarchs attempted to transform the inalienable nature of both offices and land into one dependent upon the will of the monarch.⁷

The lines of evolution in the *naxararut'iwn* as indicated by Garsoïan for the period from the fifth to the ninth centuries can be followed into the period of the kingdoms themselves. It is clear from our chief sources, Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i and T'ovma Arcruni, that this attempt at weakening the aristocratic and dynastic element of Armenian society was a policy pursued by both the Bagratuni and the Arcruni monarchs.⁸ The

⁶ GARSOÏAN 2012.

⁷ As Garsoïan points out in the same article, a change in the nature of offices can already be noticed in the usurpation of the title of *sparapet*, the prerogative of the now severely weakened Mamikonean family, by Smbat Bagratuni in the second half of the eighth century. Likewise, the testimony of Movsēs Xorenac'i suggests that the perception of land and office possession had shifted from an hereditary inalienability to that of a royal grant. It is difficult to discern, however, how much Xorenac'i's portrayal reflects contemporary reality or projects the author's ideal.

⁸ For example: Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i relates that soon after his anointment as king, Ašot I, introduced many significant reforms including arrangements for the dynastic houses, YD, 139 [=YD-t, 128]. He remarks upon the political climate in the Armenian Bagratuni kingdom of the early tenth century that “our kings, lords and princes tried to break up and take away the homes of each of the original naxarardoms, and in accord with their whims, created new *payazats* [nobles] and *spasalars* [generals] of their own” (*թագաւորք մեր և պետք և իշխանք, զորս ի բնէ նախարարութիւնքն էին՝ ջանալին վարատել և խլել յիրաքանչիրոցն բնակութեանց, և ըստ անորժից իմն ձեռական և նոր ստեղծանել պայազատս և սպասարարս*), YD, 258-9 [=YD-t, 186]. The Bagratuni rendered the house of Gnt'uni subservient to themselves, a situation that apparently caused their members some resentment, YD, 205-6; 295-7 [=YD-t, 161-2; 203-4]. King Ašot II arrested Vasak, the lord of Gelark'unik', and subordinated his domain. He later released him and “set him up on his own domain” (*Հաստատել զնա յաշխարհ տէրութեան իւրոյ*), YD, 306 [=YD-t, 208]. According to T'A, III.20 [=228-9; T'A-t, 291-2], prince Šapuh, king Ašot Bagratuni's son, conferred Derenik Arcruni's principality upon his son, Ašot Arcruni, after the former's death. Given the youth of Derenik's sons, however, Ašot appointed Gagik Apumruan Arcruni as their regent, an appointment that was resisted by the other nobility until Gagik managed to appease them. Gagik Aprumruan later imprisoned his wards and took control of Vaspurakan, receiving the support of Šapuh Bagratuni. Members of the other noble houses eventually managed to assassinate Gagik Apumruan and reestablish Ašot and his brothers. In T'A, IV.3 (anonymous continuator) [=278-9; T'A-t, 340-1], Gagik Arcruni, prince of Vaspurakan, defeats the rebellion of his father-in-law Grigor Apuhmza but confirms the family's hereditary right to the province.

Byzantine annexation of the Armenian kingdoms and the removal of the royal and many of the dynastic families from their territories during the eleventh century further exacerbated the process. Byzantium initiated a policy of reorganization and assimilation of the Armenian territories into the Imperial thematic structure, but these efforts were short lived due to the success of the Turkish incursions of the 1060s and 1070s.⁹ Although the number of people dislocated by the Byzantine annexation and the Seljuk conquests is debated, the power vacuum left in its wake is unquestionable.¹⁰

In addition to the removal of the noble dynasts, the lack of any consistent policy towards the conquered lands by the Seljuq and other dynasties, the near constant state of conflict for possession of the Armenian lands between the various Turkish polities and the Georgians, and the transference of lands between parties on a repeated basis contributed to the erosion of the security of land tenure in the region. The Seljuqs did not engage in a policy of outright annexation of these lands, but as Seljuq power advanced into Anatolia these territories devolved upon the state to administer as they were considered part of the *dar al-harb*.¹¹ The fragmented nature of land tenure in Armenia and the immediate surrounding areas is not only evident from the number of new dynasties that emerge at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries, but also from the different types of land holdings that resulted from the lack of a consistent policy regarding the designation of these lands within the Seljuq administration. Thus, the Seljuqs exerted direct control over some territories such as Malatya and Edessa through the appointment of a governor.¹²

⁹ On Byzantine administrative efforts in Armenia, see YUZBASHIAN 1975-76, ARUTJUNOVA-FIDANJAN 1980.

¹⁰ Thus Mxit'ar Goš in his *Datastanagirk'* (Lawcode), repeatedly emphasizes the lack of political control, MG 25, 26, 28, 33 [=MG-t, 106, 109, 112, 121]. Step'anos Örbēlian notes that when Elikum Örbēlian who was given control over Jahuk in Naxjewan by the Eldigüzids wished to marry, "he did not find anyone among the Christians who was appropriate for his relationship, since this realm was still under Persian authority" (*ոչ գտանէր ի քրիստոնէից զոք պատշաճ իւրոյ խնամութեան, զի աշխարհս այս զեռն էս ի ներքոյ իշխանութեան Պարսից էր*), SO, 288. See also the remarks of YOVSĒP'EAN 1969, 1, who notes that only secondary clans of the major families of the Bagratuni, Arcruni, and Siwnec'i existed in the twelfth century in the mountains of Arc'ax and Gugark', while the remnants of the Mamikonian persisted in the petty principality of Sasun, and those of the Pahlawuni in Širak and Ani.

¹¹ PEACOCK 2005 has argued convincingly that Seljuq expansion westward was driven by the need to acquire pastureland for their Türkmen followers and to secure their legitimacy; see also CAHEN 1948 on the Turkish expansion into Anatolia and Asia Minor.

¹² CAHEN 1968, 78. Christian governors were retained in both cities. After 1124, Malatya remained more or less in Dānismendid hands until 1177/8 when it was surrendered to Kilij Arslan, CAHEN 1968, 105; BOSWORTH 1996, 215.

In others, semi-independent dynasties established themselves, as in Erzurum (Saltukids), Erzinka/ Erzincan (Mengüjekids), Khartpert (Artuqids) and Sivas (Dānishmendids). Xlat' (Akhlāt/Khilāt) and its environs were granted to Söqmen al-Qutbī as an *iqṭā'*; similarly, most of lands held in Arrān was also administered by military *iqṭā'*.¹³ The city of Ani and its environs, on the other hand, were sold by Alp Arslan to the Shaddādīd emirs who had been displaced from Ganja. In other areas, Armenian lords who had not emigrated retained their territory.

The deterioration of the dynastic families and the subsequent weakening of the inalienability of land possession provided an opportunity for previously marginalized social groups to eventually emerge as central economic and political actors. The Mhargrjeli family represents one of the more outstanding examples of 'social mobility' in contemporary Caucasian society.¹⁴

II. THE ORIGIN AND RISE OF THE MĤARGRJELI

The origins of the Mhargrjeli remain contested in scholarly literature. The earliest figure belonging to the family to appear in the historical record is a certain Sargis referred to as *Mec Sargis* (*Մեծ Սարգիս*), 'Sargis the Great', in epigraphic and historical sources.¹⁵ According to an inscription left by his sons, Zak'arē and Iwanē, on his tombstone at the monastery of Sanahin, this Sargis was "the son of Zak'arē, grandson of Awag-Sargis (elder Sargis)" (*որդի Չաքարէի, թոռն աւագ Սարգսի*).¹⁶ The evidence garnered from primary sources has resulted in several different hypotheses regarding the ultimate background of this family.¹⁷

The most commonly asserted ancestry for the Mhargrjeli is based upon the accounts of the thirteenth-century historians Kirakos Ganjakec'i (1203-1272) and Vardan Arewelc'i (c.1200-1271), both probably relying

¹³ IA, X:359-61; X:666 [=IA-t, I:70-1; I:285]; CAHEN 1948, 49-50; CAHEN 1968, 79.

¹⁴ See also the remarks of LIMPER 1980, 36, who emphasizes the dynamism of Caucasian society against the more rigid depiction of TOUMANOFF 1963. All of Limper's examples of social dynamism can be dated to the twelfth – thirteenth centuries. I would like to thank my colleague, Peter Halfter, for kindly providing me with a copy of Limper's book.

¹⁵ The activities of Mec Sargis are noted in K'C' II:6, 19, 33 [=K'C'-t, 387, 398, 409].

¹⁶ ŁAFADARYAN 1957, 179 (167), cf. MINORSKY 1953, p. 102.

¹⁷ ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, provides an overview of the various positions taken by scholars regarding the family's heritage; cf. also MARGARYAN 1994. In general, our discussion follows the line of argument posited by the seminal work on the family by these two scholars. YOVSEPEAN 1969, 2, mentions various hypotheses for the family's ancestry but asserts that "the origins of the Zak'arian remain outside the scope of this work."

on the lost history of their teacher, Yovhannēs Vanakan Tawušec‘i (1181-1251). According to Ganjakec‘i, Zak‘arē and Iwanē were “the sons of the pious prince Sargis, son of Vahram, son of Zak‘aria, who had separated from the Kurds of the Babirakan *xel*” (որդիք Սարգսի բարեպաշտ իշխանի, որդւոյ Վահրամայ, որդւոյ Ջաքարիայ, որ Հատուածեալ ի քրդաց ի Բաբիրական խելին).¹⁸ A similar lineage is provided by Arewelc‘i in his *Historical Compilation*; according to him, the brothers were “sons of Sargis, son of Vahram, son of Zak‘arē, son of Sargis of Kurdish nationality who had emigrated to the kings of Joroget,¹⁹ who are of the Bagratuni line. They accepted Christianity and were honored. Xošorni was given to them as a place of habitation.”²⁰ The Kurdish ancestry of the family has been accepted by numerous scholars.²¹ In his study of the Shaddādids of Ganja and Ani, Minorsky further substantiated the account of Kirakos by noting that “[t]he name Bā-pīr is frequent among the Kurds and a clan Pīrān exists among the Mangur federation.”²²

The kings of Tašir-Joroget mentioned by Vardan, represented the final remnants of the Armenian Bagratuni kings to survive the Byzantine expansion and Seljuq invasions of the eleventh century.²³ They maintained control of their kingdom until the region was conquered in 1118 by the Georgian Bagrat‘ioni king, Davit‘ II. At the beginning of the twelfth century, Davit‘ launched a series of campaigns against Seljuq occupied fortresses. The culmination of this military activity was the capture in 1122 of the emirate of Tblisi which had been in Muslim hands since the eighth century. Davit‘ subsequently made the city the capital of his kingdom. His conquest also included the capture of Širak and the city of Ani in 1124.²⁴ Following Vardan’s account, Minorsky argued

¹⁸ KG, 162.

¹⁹ On the region of Tašir-Joroget that stretched to the north-west of Lake Geluk‘uni (Sevan) see HEWSEN 2001, 114 (90), 115 (91), 118 (94), 119 (95).

²⁰ VA, 138; VA-t, 211.

²¹ See the list given in ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 44n16. We may also add LIMPER 1980, 199.

²² MINORSKY 1953, 102. For a refutation of Minorsky’s thesis, see ŠAHNAZARYAN 1985, 209.

²³ On the Kiwrikan dynasty of the Bagratuni of Tašir-Joroget or Lōri-Tašir, see MOVŠĖSIAN 1927.

²⁴ On Davit‘’s expansion, see ALLEN 1971, 96-100, SUNY 1988, 34-37. Possession of the lands that formerly belonged to the kingdom of the Bagratuni, however, proved elusive, as Davit‘’s son and successor Demetre I was forced to relinquish his father’s territorial gains in Širak. The Georgian kingdom tried repeatedly throughout the twelfth century to recapture the region of Širak and the prized city of Ani. Ani was taken by the Georgian kingdom twice more, in 1161 and 1174, but on both occasions it was again forced to abandon its acquisitions after brief periods of tenure.

that the ancestors of Zak'arē and Iwanē immigrated from Mesopotamia and entered the service of the Bagratuni kings of Tašir and accepted Christianity. They subsequently passed into the service of the Georgian monarchy after the lands of their former lords were absorbed into the Georgian kingdom.²⁵

The Mhargrjeli themselves, however, do not mention such an ancestry in their inscriptions; nor is a Kurdish origin for the family asserted in the Georgian sources.²⁶ By contrast, the anonymous early thirteenth-century Georgian account entitled the *Histories and Eulogies of the Crowned* (ისტორიანი და აზმანი შარავანდედტანი)²⁷ attributes an Achaemenid ancestry to the family, claiming the Mhargrjeli to be the descendants of Shah Artaxerxes I.²⁸ In Classical sources, Artaxerxes I often bore the nickname μακρόχειρ, *longimanus*, 'long-hand',²⁹ which corresponds to the meaning of Mhargrjeli.³⁰ This clearly fantastic lineage underscores the rhetorical intent of these 'literary' ancestries and casts doubt upon their historicity.

H. Margaryan has convincingly argued that the story found in the Armenian historiographical tradition is fabricated and intended to bring the origins of the Mhargrjeli into conformity with earlier paradigms of Armenian noble lineage.³¹ The accounts of the origin of the Mhargrjeli

²⁵ Cf. MINORSKY 1953, p. 102, who, however, does not note the discrepancy between the genealogies found in Kirakos and Vardan and that found in the inscription.

²⁶ Step'anos Örbēlean, writing at the beginning of the fourteenth century, similarly does not repeat the Kurdish ancestry of the Mhargrjeli, but comments that they were "Armenian by ethnicity, 'orthodox' [i.e., Armenian Apostolic] by faith" (Հայ աղգաւ, ուղղափառ Հաւատով), SÖ, 287.

²⁷ This text (henceforth, HEC) is included in the renowned Georgian historical compilation *K'art'lis C'xovreba* (*Life of K'art'li* or, more commonly, the *Georgian Chronicles*).

²⁸ *K'C' II:110 [=K'C'-t, 474].*

²⁹ See, e.g., STRABO 1877, 15.3.21; PLUTARCH 1926, 11.

³⁰ ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 48, asserts that the Georgian Bagrat'ioni disseminated the idea of a Persian origin for the Mhargrjeli in order to delegitimize the latter's claims to a Bagratuni heritage (on which see below). This theory is plausible, but not entirely convincing, as I do not see why the anonymous historian would chose such an elevated ancestry. In addition, there is no indication in the text that the author of the HEC is being polemical at this point. It seems more plausible that the Georgian author — like Kirakos Ganjakec'i and Vardan Arewelc'i — is writing in accordance with contemporary regional literary models and was aware of the semantic connection between the names.

³¹ MARGARYAN 1992 (2-3), 139-152, esp. 143-4; Margaryan is followed by ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001. According to MARGARYAN 1992, 149, and ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 57-58, the ethnonym 'Kurd' in Armenian historiography was interchangeable with 'Mede'; indeed, some sources such as Zak'aria Kanakerc'i (17th c.) claim a Median origin for the Mhargrjeli. For Margaryan and Šahnazaryan the Median origin of the family asserted the Mhargrjeli's status in the Georgian kingdom, for as Medians, the Mhargrjeli would be of royal descent

closely parallel that of the Mamikonean family as reported in the *Epic Histories*,³² in the *Primary History*,³³ and in Movsēs Xorenac'i's *History of the Armenians*.³⁴ According to these sources, the ancestors of the Mamikonean fled from China and were settled in Armenia. The Mamikonean were not the only noble family to whom a foreign ancestry was attributed by the historiographical tradition.³⁵ Assyrian origins are attributed to the clans of the Arcruni and Gnuni,³⁶ while a Jewish heritage is ascribed to the Bagratuni;³⁷ and Step'anos Ōrbēlian claims that the Ōrbēlian family, too, came from China.³⁸ The theory of a princely Kurdish origin for the Mhargrjeli accommodates well a historiographic framework in which foreign nobility are integrated within Armenian society. Furthermore, this model may also have enjoyed regional resonances. According to Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādur (17th c.), the Seljuqs claimed descent from the Turanian ruler Afrāsiyāb, who fled from Kaykhusraw, and found refuge among the Qiniq Türkmen.³⁹ Although this source is admittedly late and is one antithetical to the Seljuq's attempt to distance themselves from their Türkmen roots, it nonetheless points to a similar pattern of a legitimizing narrative within an Iranian context. Two other claims of royal descent by the Mhargrjeli themselves — that of descent from the families of the Bagratuni and the Arcruni — will be treated below in discussion of the Mhargrjeli's legitimization of their rule.

Notwithstanding their fictitious descent from the Achaemenids, the characterization of the Mhargrjeli in the HEC indicates that they were a

from Aždahak. In addition, according to Movsēs Xorenac'i, in the days of King Vałaršak the descendants of Aždahak were ranked second in the kingdom. This genealogy therefore depicts the Mhargrjeli's position as the second highest family in the Georgian kingdom. Šahnazaryan understands this development as an Armenian reaction to the Georgian theory of Persian origins for the Mhargrjeli described above by which the historiographical tradition is able to preserve both Georgian Bagrat'ioni supremacy and Mhargrjeli prominence. While I agree with the general literary framework for the idea of a foreign ancestry for the Mhargrjeli (MARGARYAN 1992, 151), in my view, Margaryan and Šahnazaryan may be straining the limits of this interpretation in making the connection with Aždahak.

³² PB [PB-t], V,iv,xxxvii

³³ As printed in SEBĒOS 1979, 56-57; Engl. tr. MX-t, 367-368.

³⁴ MX [MX-t], II:81.

³⁵ On the predilection of exotic origins for the dynastic families see also TOUMANOFF 1963, 140,n245, although I would hesitate to agree with his conclusion that such fanciful origins resulted principally from a sense of the degradation of the dynastic system.

³⁶ MX I:23; TA, 6-7 [=TA-t, 68].

³⁷ MX I:22. The *Primary History* (SEBĒOS 1979, 51 [=MX-t, 362]) asserts a native origin for the Bagratuni which Xorenac'i explicitly rejects.

³⁸ SÖ, 285. This assertion is most certainly derived from the example of the Mamikonean.

³⁹ Cited in PEACOCK 2011, 80.

military family. At Sargis's appointment as *amirspasalar* (ამირსპასალარი) of the Georgian forces by Queen T'amar, the author describes him as a '*guariani*' (გუარიანი) who was 'raised in the army' (აღზრდილი ლაშქრობათი).⁴⁰ I propose that *guariani* here is equivalent to Armenian *azat* (ազատ), 'freemen', a member of the non-dynastic lesser nobility who functioned primarily in the military and were elevated to the nobility on account of their service.⁴¹ In an addition to the text of the HEC preserved in ms. R,⁴² in which Sargis's sons Zak'arē and Iwanē are further described, their loyalty and their being 'much experienced in war' (დიდათ განოცდილნი ლაშქრობათა შინა) are similarly emphasized, rather than any particular distinction by birth.⁴³ The addition also notes that the sons were 'of the Armenian religion' (სჯულითა სომეხნი), i.e., members of the anti-Chalcedonian Armenian Apostolic Church.⁴⁴ Sargis's nephews by his brother Vahram, Zak'arē and Sargis, also served in the army, apparently under their cousins' command, and are likewise praised for martial skill.⁴⁵ Thus, given the emphasis on their military experience and faithful service, as well as the testimonies to their faith and to the family name of Sargis, the Mhargrjeli, instead of having been dislocated Kurdish princes, appear to have been members of the lesser Armenian nobility who had entered into the military service of the Georgian kingdom.

As the first historical mention of Sargis the Great occurs in relation to the capture of Ani from the Shaddādid emirs by Georgian forces in 1161, this year serves as a *terminus ante quem* the family entered into Georgian service.⁴⁶ Sargis may have originally served the Ōrbēlian family; he is

⁴⁰ K'C' II:33.

⁴¹ On *azatk'*, see TOUMANOFF 1963, 94, 124-126; PB-t, 512; LIMPER 1980, 37.

⁴² K'C' II:33.

⁴³ In the *Life of T'amar*, K'C' II:123, where this passage also occurs nearly verbatim, the phrase 'in war' (ლაშქრობათა შინა) is omitted, although their loyalty is similarly emphasized. In the episode of Iwanē's conversion recorded in the HEC, Zak'arē attributes his theological ignorance to his being an 'army-man' (მელაშქრე), K'C' II:82. Although the account of the argument between Zak'arē and Iwanē over the true Christian confession in the K'C' is almost certainly fictional, Zak'arē's reference to himself as belonging to the army rather than to any noble family underscores his and his family's military status and origins.

⁴⁴ Both the addition of ms. R to the HEC (K'C' II:33) and the *Life of T'amar* (K'C' II:123), note that Iwanē became a 'true Christian' (ჰეშმარიტ ქრისტიანე), i.e., Georgian Chalcedonian; ჰეშმარიტ < Arm. *hēšmarit*.

⁴⁵ K'C' II:39 [=K'C'-I, 414].

⁴⁶ An inscription at the monastery of Halpat indicates that it was commissioned by a certain Awag-Sargis, son of Xostrov, brother of Karim, but it is undated. BROSSET 1851, 267, identifies this Awag-Sargis with Sargis the Great's grandfather, but produces no evidence to substantiate this identification. The identification is accepted uncritically by

mentioned in the HEC as Iwanē Ōrbēlian's assistant (თანხმეობი) during the brief Georgian tenure of Ani after its capture.⁴⁷ If the inscription left by Zak'arē and Iwanē that refers to their grandfather and great-grandfather may be taken as commemorating the first generations of the family to have entered the service of either the Ōrbēlian family or the Georgian crown, we may speculate that Sargis's grandfather, Awag-Sargis, began his service at the beginning of the twelfth century. Such a date is probable as it would coincide with Davit's conquest of the kingdom of Tašir-Joroget and the important fortress of Lori in 1118. Sargis's ancestors may have previously been in the service of the Bagratuni kings of Tašir-Joroget and then subsequently passed into Georgian service. This chronology would generally correspond to the narrative provided by Vardan Arewelc'i, minus the fictitious Kurdish ancestry. Alternatively, the revitalization of Georgian military activity under Davit' as well as the king's encouragement of the incorporation of foreign elements⁴⁸ into the Georgian kingdom to increase the number of available soldiers and to counter the power of the Georgian dynasts may have induced the family to seek their fortunes there.

Both Giorgi III and his daughter T'amar continued and expanded the policies of Davit' II to increase the size of the army and to check the power of the Georgian dynastic nobles.⁴⁹ Towards that end they both strengthened the Armenian presence in the military as the rise of Sargis the Great to power during the reign of Giorgi III illustrates. As mentioned, the HEC notes that he served as Iwanē Ōrbēlian's assistant during the brief Georgian tenure of Ani after its capture in 1161. In 1177 Iwanē Ōrbēlian rebelled against Giorgi III. Sargis prudently changed sides and supported Giorgi for which he was later rewarded.⁵⁰ From an inscription

LIMPER 1980, 199. In his study of the monastery of Halbat, Y. Łrimec'i, does not specifically identify the Tēr Yovhannēs referred to as the director of the monastery in the inscription, but judging from his index, he seems to have thought the inscription referred to a later director of the monastery, Yovhannēs Armanec'i (1257-94?), ŁRIMEC'I 1965, 74, 180.

⁴⁷ K'C' II:6. The text is clear that Iwanē Ōrbēlian was both *mandaturt'-uxuc'esi* and *amirspasalar*, against Brosset's translation, [K'C'-t, 387], which attributes the latter title to Sargis; VA, p. 127 [=VA-t, p. 206] notes that administration of Ani was granted to Sargis, who is not designated *amirspasalar*. Other sources only mention Iwanē, see LA PORTA 2008-9, 129n5, 138n41.

⁴⁸ Davit' relied upon the Qipčak in particular, see GOLDEN 1984, 78-81; GOLDEN 1996, 59-62. Armenian elements increased more dramatically during the reigns of Giorgi III and T'amar, see below.

⁴⁹ With regards to the policy of Giorgi III, see, for example, K'C' II:6 and 19; for T'amar, K'C' II:30 and 33.

⁵⁰ K'C' II:19 [=K'C'-t, 398]. On the rebellion see LA PORTA 2008-9.

of 1181 from the monastery of Sanahin, it appears that he had been raised to the rank of *amirspasalar* (commander-in-chief) by that year.⁵¹ Sargis further appears as the first of the greatest princes of Giorgi's kingdom in an inscription on the narthex of the church of S. Grigor of the monastery of Hatarcin dated to 1184.⁵²

Giorgi's daughter and successor, Queen T'amar, who promoted Armenian members of the military to the detriment of the previously favored Qipčak, again elevated Sargis to the rank of *amirspasalar* of the Georgian army in 1185.⁵³ His elder son, Zak'arē, likewise later received the position of *amirspasalar* after the death of his father in 1187⁵⁴ and subsequently, also that of *mandaturt'-uxuc'esi* (მანდატურთ-უხუცესი) or grand master of ceremonies. In this latter capacity, Zak'arē commanded the palace guard, directed foreign affairs, and functioned as the head of protocol in the court. Zak'arē's younger brother, Iwanē, was appointed *msaxurt'-uxuc'esi* (მსახურთ-უხუცესი), the royal chamberlain and administrator of domains.⁵⁵ Adhering to their father's policy of loyalty to the crown, Zak'arē and Iwanē played instrumental roles in defeating the rebellion of the Georgian nobles who supported the cause of Queen T'amar's ex-husband, the Rus' prince, Yuriĭ Andreevič Bogolyubskij.⁵⁶

The brothers were also effective in the Georgian military campaigns in the final decade of the twelfth century that attempted to secure the

⁵¹ The inscription was commissioned by Bishop Yovhannēs, director (*aṛajnord*) of the monastery, who notes that the inscription was composed "in the time of the victorious King Giorgi, and during the generalship of Sargis and of his sons Zak'arē and Iwanē" (ი ძამანასის ჯაფიძის მეთაურობის დროს და მისი ძმებისა და შვილებისა) LAFADARYAN 1957, 103-4 (12); L'RIMEC'I 1965, 150.

⁵² Inscription at Hatarcin, DHV VI:37 (62).

⁵³ No reason is given in any source as to why Sargis may have been relieved of duty as *amirspasalar*. It is possible that since he was near the end of his life that he had 'retired' from the position only to be reappointed by T'amar.

⁵⁴ T'amar first granted the position of *amirspasalar* to Gamrekel T'oreli after the death of Sargis, K'C' II:33 [=K'C'-t, 410]; Zak'arē was appointed after Gamrekel's death, K'C' II:55 [=K'C'-t, 429]. BROSSET 1851, 269-70, notes a contradiction in the chronology. According to his calculations, Gamrekel died in 1193 after T'amar had remarried, but an inscription from Sanahin dated to 1191 already designates Zak'arē as *amirspasalar*. Brosset suggests that the inscriptions provide a more solid presentation of the historical record. YOVSEPEAN 1969, p. 4, offers another possibility to explain this contradiction. He suggests that after the death of his father in 1187, Zak'arē was appointed *amirspasalar* of the Armenian forces only and that he became *amirspasalar* of both the Armenian and Georgian forces after 1193.

⁵⁵ On these offices see SURGULADZE 1973, 238-43; LIMPER 1980, 38.

⁵⁶ K'C' II:50-54 [=K'C'-t, 425-29].

former Bagratuni and Arcruni territories for the Georgian kingdom.⁵⁷ The internal conflicts following the deaths of Qilij-Arslan II and Salāh al-Dīn in 1192 and 1193 respectively that kept the Seljuq and Ayyubid sultanates largely pre-occupied, provided Queen T'amar and her consort, the Ossetian prince, Davit' Soslan, with the opportunity to conquer the territory that was now in the hands of the Shaddādids of Ani and the Eldigüzid atabegs of Azerbaijan. The Shaddādids had been weakened by prior warfare between the Georgian kingdom and the Eldigüzids, and the latter eventually succumbed to infighting following the death of Muhammad b. Eldigüz in 1186. The Georgian forces defeated the Eldigüzid Abū Bakr at the battle of Šamk'or in 1195 and subsequently raided the regions of Ganja(k), Arcax, and Siwnik'. According to the *Akhbār al-dawla al-Seljūqīya*, Amīr Amīrān 'Umar was crowned in Ganja with the Georgian forces in attendance. He died, however, twenty-two days later and Abū Bakr sent his son to take control of Ganja which slipped out of the Georgian sphere of influence for the time being.⁵⁸ To the south, the fortress of Anberd was captured by 1196 or 1200,⁵⁹ the city of Ani in 1198⁶⁰, that of Bjni in 1201 and that of Duin in 1203. In 1204, they defeated the Seljuk Sultan of Rum, Rukn al-Dīn, at Basēn/Basiani and

⁵⁷ On the military activities of the Georgians in Anatolia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries see now the valuable analysis of PEACOCK 2006; see also LIMPER 1980, 44-54, on the foreign policy of the Georgian kingdom during the reign of T'amar.

⁵⁸ BOSWORTH 2011, 124.

⁵⁹ According to Vardan Arewelc'i, Anberd was taken in 1196 [VA, 138, VA-t, 211]; in an inscription cited below, Iwanē Mhargrjeli lists Anberd as the brothers' first conquest. The fortress, however, may have had to be retaken in 1200 as Zak'arē erected a *xač'k'ar* ('cross-stone') at Anberd with the following inscription: "In the year 649 [=1200], I Zak'arē amirspasalar of the Armenians and Georgians, son of Sargis the Great, captured the impregnable fortress of Anberd from the sons of the slave Hagar," (Ի ՈՒԽԹ Թուականութիւնս եւ Չաքարէ ամիր սպասալար Հայոց եւ Վրաց որդի Մեծին Սարգսի առի զանառիկ ամրոցս զԱնբերդոյ յախնայծին (sic) որդոցն Հաքարու) ŁAFARDARYAN 1963, 169. Step'anos Ōrbēlean similarly lists the taking of Anberd after that of Ani, SŌ, 287. A chronicle preserved in J1288 (1273), mentions the capture of Anberd by Zak'arē and Iwanē in Armenian era 647, which is 1198, MC'JSY 4:492.

⁶⁰ An inscription at the monastery Hořomos at Ani inscribed in 1198 (Armenian era ՈՒԽԹ, 647), celebrates the rule of Zak'arē and Iwanē over "this city and all the lands of Greater Armenia" (քաղաքիս եւ բոլոր երկրիս մեծ Հայոց), MAHÉ 2001, 182. A colophon composed in 1199 (Armenian era ՈՒԽԹ, 648) at the same monastery and preserved in J3578.1q(2) notes that Ani was taken in the previous year (ամառ մի յառաջ) when "the Sultan fled from Ani, and the Christ-loving generals of the Armenians and Georgians, Zak'arē and Iwanē, ruled; may Christ God aid them" (փախեալ սուլտանն յԱնուոյ, և տիրեցին քրիստոսասէր զօրավարքն Հայոց և Վրաց'Չաքարէ և Իվանէ, որոց ապնետա Ք<րիստոն>ս Ա<ստուու>ծ), MC'JSY 10:605.

captured Karin/Erzurum and Erzinka;⁶¹ Kars⁶² was taken in 1206.⁶³ That year they reached the important commercial cities on the northern shore of Lake Van, although this area was never successfully retained.⁶⁴

These military victories brought much of the territory of the former Bagratuni kingdom under Georgian control as well as many of the lands

⁶¹ K'C' II:99-100 [K'C'-t, 466]; see also YOVSEPEAN 1969, 5n2; HŽP III:537; and n63 below.

⁶² The taking of Kars formed a tactical prelude to the Georgian attack on Xlat'. According to Ibn al-Athīr, Kars was a dependency of the latter (IA XII:255; IA-t III:123). The Georgians had harassed Kars for many years until finally the governor (unnamed), after having requested help from those who ruled Xlat' and not receiving it, handed the city over. Ibn al-Athīr thus suggests that Kars and its governor were under the at least nominal control of the Shāh-i Arman.

⁶³ According to Vardan Arewelc'i, VA, 138, VA-t, 211, two fortresses along the Šamk'or river, Getabakk' (important for its copper mines) and Č'arek', were also taken in that year. Kirakos Ganjakec'i, [KG, 163] provides a similar though not identical list of conquered territories to that of Vardan without, however, giving any chronological information: "the districts around the Sea of Gełark'unik', Tašir, Ayrarat, the city of Bjni, and Dwin, Anberd, the city of Ani, Kars, Vayoc' Jor, the land of Siwnik' and the fortresses, cities and districts surrounding it. They also rendered the sultan of the city of Karin tributary" (Հուրջ զծովովն Գեղարքունոյ, և զՏաշիր, և զԱյրարատ, զԲջնի քաղաք և զԴուին, և զԱնբերդ, և զԱնի քաղաք, և զԿարս, և զՎայոց ձոր, և զաշխարհն Սիւնեաց և որ Հուրջ զինովս եւն բերդք, և քաղաքք, և գաւառք. Հարկատուս արարին և զսուլտանն Կարնոյ քաղաքին). He further attributes the conquest of Gardman, K'arherj, Ergevank', Tawuš, Kac'aret', Terunakan and Gag to a collateral branch of the Mhargrjeli family headed by another Zak'arē who also "placed in difficult straits the city of Šamk'or, which his son, Vahram, later captured" (և զՇամքոր քաղաք ի նեղ էարկ, զոր յետոյ էառ որդի նորա Վահրամ). The submission of the Sultan of Karin is also mentioned by Zak'aria Sarkawag K'anak'erc'i (d.1699) in his *Chronicle* [ZK'-t, 275], followed by the anonymous *Պատմութիւն քաղաքին յԱնոյ* (History of the city of Ani) attributed to Mxit'ar Anec'i, but of later provenance [MARGARYAN 1983, 119, 124n16]. On the variable relationship between the Saltuqids of Karin/Erzurum and the Georgian kingdom, see PEACOCK 2006, 130-131.

⁶⁴ In 1209, Iwanē besieged the city of Xlat' (Akhlāt), but he was captured in the process and forced to give his daughter's hand in marriage to its Ayyūbid ruler, see below, 87-88, 102. A colophon to a gospel copied at the See of the Catholicossate in Hromklay in 663 [=1214], describing the boundaries of Georgia and neighboring powers indicates that the Georgians were not able to retain control over the southern regions: "In the patriarchate of the sagacious and wise prelate, Lord Yovhannēs; and in the reign of Levon, son of Step'anē; and in the sultanate of Mēlik'ēlytern [i.e., the Ayyūbid, al-Malik al-'Ādil], who ruled Egypt and the Holy Places of Jerusalem, and Damascus, and Edessa, which is the land of Cop'k', [from] Xlat' until the borders of Georgia. And in the kingdom of the Georgians of Laša, who ruled Tp'xis [Tbilisi] and Ani and many other cities of the previous lords of Armenians, Alans, and Caucasian Albanians, from Karin until Persia. And [in the] dominion of the son of Xosro Šah, who ruled the land of the Romans [i.e., Byzantines], Caesarea, Sebastia, and Konya, and many other metropolises and Sinope to the shores of the Mediterranean. And in the kingdom of the Romans of Laskaris, who ruled the seashore of the Black Sea from Sinope until the royal city of Constantinople; and the nation of the Franks conquered him and removed him from Rome [i.e., Constantinople]. And in the kingdom of the Syrians of Ehannai who is in India," YOVSEPEAN 1969, 343.

of the kingdom of Siwnik' and some of the territory of the former Arcruni kingdom. Queen T'amar bestowed both the rule and administration of these lands to Zak'arē Mhargrjeli.⁶⁵ From the previous discussion on the origin of the Mhargrjeli and this resumé of the rise of the family, it is apparent that they were not of an ancient noble lineage that enjoyed independent legitimacy, but were military men who were dependent on the crown for their position and authority.

III. OTHER INSTANCES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The Armenian military class was not alone in profiting from the degeneration of the *naxarar* system. We may observe an increase in the prominence of other formerly more marginal social groups as well. In the aftermath of the Seljuq invasions and the loosening of the social order, urban notables and confraternities emerge as important economic and political actors. The wealth accumulated by the Armenian merchant families in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries does not need to be elaborated here.⁶⁶ I. Orbeli has shown that not only officials, but also private individuals including women, were involved in the financing of the repairs at Ani.⁶⁷ J. Rogers has argued that the Mhargrjeli reliance upon urban classes to pay for reconstruction projects at Ani and at Kars indicates that their financial resources were not that extensive.⁶⁸ While this interpretation may be justified, I think the participation of the urban citizenry in the refortification of the city walls sheds light on the new expectations of the urban classes, their increased role in the maintenance, defense, and operation of their urban environment, and their unprecedented ability to wield political power.

⁶⁵ The HEC is curiously silent about both the campaigns that conquered Armenia and the grant of these territories to the Mhargrjeli, although cf. the anonymous *Life of Queen T'amar*, K'C' II:130. Armenian historical narratives, inscriptions, and colophons remain our principal sources for the conquest and control of these territories by the Mhargrjeli.

⁶⁶ MANANDYAN 1965, 179-187; LIMPER 1980, 235-41; MAHÉ 2001, 1335-1339. J.M. Rogers has attributed the foundation of a chain of caravansaries in Anatolia to the Mhargrjeli and observed that the existence of such a chain indicates the relatively high volume of trade and prosperity attained during their rule, ROGERS 1976a, 324-25.

⁶⁷ ORBELI 1963b, 479-80. Goshgarian has noted the large degree to which private individuals, many connected to the administration, endowed and financed Seljuq construction in the thirteenth-century Anatolia, GOSHGARIAN 2007, 169-72 (esp. 171).

⁶⁸ See ROGERS 1976b, 92, referring to the inscriptions at Kars recorded by I. Orbeli, (ORBELI 1963a, 470-471), particularly to no. 3 inscribed in 1234, in which it is written that "we, the great and small Christians of Kars, built [i.e., financed] the towers" (*մեք Կարույք թրխտոնաւքս մեծ եւ փոքր շինեցաք զբերդներս*).

In several instances historiographic sources record the political influence of the urban classes in deciding the fate of a city. In particular, the account of the battle for control of the important commercial center of Xlat' (Akhilāt/Khīlāt) reveals how urban groups tried to negotiate between the various parties vying for power.⁶⁹ The citizens of Xlat' and Manazkert refused entry to the Seljuq Mughīth al-Dīn Ṭoghrlī Shāh of Erzurum into their cities. The inhabitants of Xlat' then invited the Ayyūbid, Najm al-Dīn al-Malik al-Awḥad, to take control of the city.⁷⁰ The citizens of Xlat' later rebelled against his rule and Najm al-Dīn was forced to besiege it and violently subdue the rebels.⁷¹ Ibn al-Athīr notes that after this, the will of the men of Xlat' and particularly that of the unity of the young men (*fityān*) was broken. Bar Hebraeus also records the role of 'young men', called *fityān* in the Arabic translation of his *Chronicle*. In the Syriac original, however, he refers to them as, "the heads of the bands of the men of Khālāt, who in the language of the country are called '*mangda-bhkīr*'" (as transcribed by Budge).⁷² I suggest that the first element of this word represents Armenian *mankti* / *mangti* (մանկութի), 'youths'.⁷³ This raises the possibility that the young men intended were members of an Armenian brotherhood. While the second part of the compound remains uncertain, I propose that the final element (transcribed by Budge as *bhkīr*) may represent Syriac *bhīr*, meaning 'first-born', and we may compare the usual Armenian designation for the heads of the brotherhoods: *mankta-wag* / *mangdawak* (մանկտաւաղ), 'youth elder'.⁷⁴ During Iwanē's unsuccessful siege of the city, Kirakos Ganjakec'i claims it was 'the men of the city' (արանց քաղաքի) who captured him and brought him to the Ayyūbid Sultan; likewise, it was 'the townspeople' (քաղաքացի) whom Zak'arē threatened in his attempt to secure his brother's release.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ We may also note the account of the Seljuq official Mas'ūd b. Nāmdār cited in PEACOCK 2005, 225-26, who complains of the various groups vying for power in Baylaqān in Arrān in the early twelfth century and particularly of the tremendous power of the rabble (*al-ghaghwā*). Cf. also the role of the people in the struggle for Ganja reported in the *Akhbār al-dawla al-Seljuqiyya*, BOSWORTH 2011, 123-124.

⁷⁰ IA XII:272-3 [=IA-t III:135-6].

⁷¹ The anonymous Syriac *Chronicon ad annum 1234* underscores the role of Mughīth al-Dīn in the rebellion, but confirms that when the Ayyūbids retook control of the city they killed many of the chiefs and nobles and those who conspired with the Seljuqs, ANONSYR 218 [=ANONSYR-t, 163].

⁷² BAR HEBRAEUS 1932, I:364.

⁷³ An alternative plural form of *մանկութի*, 'child, youth', NBHL II:206.

⁷⁴ NBHL II:206. On the brotherhoods see GOSHGARIAN 2007; DADOYAN 2004 and 2005; RUSSELL 1995; XAC'IKYAN 1951 and 1962. None of these studies, however, mentions the example from Bar Hebraeus.

⁷⁵ KG, 165.

Another epiphenomenon of the weakening of traditional social institutions appears to be a strengthening in the political role of women in Anatolian and Caucasian society. Both Armenian and Turkic rulers used women to support their political legitimacy, but their role was not limited to being bearers of legitimacy; they also contributed to their political and cultural environment. For example, Iwanē Orbēlian's wife, Rūsudan, likely assisted him in his attempted rebellion against Giorgi III.⁷⁶ The HEC mentions that two women served as diplomats to quell a rebellion that fomented against T'amar.⁷⁷ According to Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Iwanē Mhargrjeli's daughter, T'amt'a, who was married to the Ayyūbid Sultan of Xlat',⁷⁸ was instrumental in insuring the safety and prosperity of Christians in the region of Tarōn.⁷⁹ Although the Khwarazm-Shāh later dispossessed the Ayyūbids of Xlat', T'amt'a was subsequently confirmed by the Mongols as the ruler of the city.⁸⁰ Women of the ruling classes also endowed churches, supported building projects, and commissioned manuscripts.⁸¹

The most famous and powerful woman to dominate the period was Queen T'amar of Georgia herself. She was able to ascend to and maintain the Georgian throne on account of the weakening of the Georgian dynastic families and thanks to the support of the military classes who depended

⁷⁶ See LA PORTA 2008-9.

⁷⁷ K'C' II:32 [=K'C'-t, 408].

⁷⁸ She was first married to Najm al-Dīn al-Malik al-Awḥad in 1209 after Iwanē's failed attack on the city. After al-Awḥad's death shortly thereafter, she married his brother Abu'l Fath Muẓaffar al-Dīn al-Malik al-Ashraf.

⁷⁹ Among the Islamic historians that give an account of the siege, Ibn al-Furāt and al-Nuwayrī explicitly comment that Iwanē's daughter was permitted to maintain her religion; al-Nuwayrī adds that Najm al-Dīn al-Malik al-Awḥad built a church for her in Xlat', NUWAIRĪ 29:47-8, IBN AL-FURĀT 5.1:104-5.

⁸⁰ KG, 292; MINORSKY 1953, 155-6.

⁸¹ See, e.g., the donation inscriptions of Rūsudan, daughter of King Kiwrikē II of Lori-Tašir, erected at the monastery of Sanahin, ĻAFADARYAN 1957, 115 (30, dated to 1181); or of her sister, Mariam, at the monastery Halbat, ĻAFADARYAN 1963, 157-8 (24) (dated to 1185); 176-7 (45) (dated to 1200); 175-6 (44) (dated to 1212); Sanahin bridge was commissioned at the end of the twelfth century by Vaneni, the wife of Abas II and the sister of Zak'arē and Iwanē Mhargrjeli, ĻAFADARYAN 1957, 185; HARUT'YUNYAN 1960, 87-93. Another of the Mhargrjeli sisters, Xorišah, endowed a church at the monastery of S. Yakob in 1212, DHV V:12 (2) and, with her husband, Vaxtang, commissioned a gospel in 1216, MAT'EVOSYAN 1984, 94. In a colophon (1205) to the Homiliary of Muš, renowned for its size, women are mentioned among those who had donated money to purchase the manuscript for the monastery of Holy Apostles, MAT'EVOSYAN 1984, 47. Vaneni Xatbakean also commissioned at least two gospels in 1224 and 1232, YOVĒP'EAN 1969, 343-4 (app. 2.3-4). ROGERS 1976b, 89, has noted the participation in endowments and building projects by female members of the nobility in Seljuq Anatolia.

on her for their own standing.⁸² Her ability to finance these elements of the military was in turn partially based upon land grants bestowed in the conquered territories.

IV. LAND GRANTS AND LEGITIMACY

The grants of conquered territory resolved two very specific and inter-related problems for the Georgian monarchy: 1) how could the monarchy maintain the loyalty of a warrior class that was not bound by familial or legal ties to the crown; and 2) how could the monarchy best secure and administer the land that had been captured. Throughout the twelfth century, the monarchy faced the problem of revolt on the part of important dynastic families. In order to pacify these families, the crown relied increasingly on securing their loyalty through 'gifts' that included titles, treasure, offices, and land.⁸³ Simultaneously, the monarchy diluted the military significance of the dynastic families through the incorporation of mercenary soldiers, particularly of Qipčak and Armenian origin, into the Georgian army. Both of these policies strained the coffers of the royal treasury. The majority of Georgian military incursions south into Armenian territory during the reign of Giorgi III and the early years of Queen T'amar are best characterized as raiding parties that primarily strove to replenish the treasury. There is little indication that they were launched with the intention of permanent acquisition or settlement.⁸⁴

⁸² On the precariousness of T'amar's position and visual attempts to solidify it, see EASTMOND 1998, 104-10.

⁸³ The accession of Queen T'amar, for example, witnessed a renewed threat against the monarchy by the Georgian dynastic families. The defeat of the rebellion was accompanied by the usual 'generosity' of the crown Cf. *K'C'* II:29 [=K'C'-t, 405, reading of V] for the Queen's opening the treasury after her accession and satisfying her supporters after the defeat of rebels who sided with her first husband, *K'C'* II:54 [=K'C'-t, 429].

⁸⁴ For the raids during the reign of Giorgi III, see, for example, *K'C'* II:5-6 [=K'C'-t, 384-5], where the chronicler notes that the booty filled the areas around Tblisi, thus implying that it was removed to the capital; *K'C'* II:17 [=K'C'-t, 397], where the chronicler specifically notes that Giorgi amassed all the spoils from military excursions and stored it in the citadel of Ujarma in Tblisi. In none of these raids does the HEC indicate that Giorgi left any lieutenant to undertake the administration of conquered cities. Vardan Arewelc'i similarly does not mention the installment of a lieutenant in Dwin after its conquest by Giorgi, VA, p.127 [=VA-t, p.206]. During the reign of T'amar, see, for example, the raids on Dwin along with others between the years 1187 to 1192, *K'C'* II:39 [=K'C'-t 414-415]. The exception to this pattern is the monarchy's approach to the important city of Ani, which was captured by Davit' II in 1124, and by Giorgi III in 1161 and again in 1174. In all three instances, the Georgians attempted to retain and administer the city. Each time,

The altered political climate of the final decade of the twelfth century, however, encouraged an adjustment in the military policy of the Georgian kingdom. The Seljuqs, Eldigüzids, and Ayyūbids suffered from internal fracturing following the deaths of Kilij Arslan II (1192) and Salāh al-Dīn (1193). The Georgians were able to capitalize upon their weakened positions and incorporate the Armenian territories into the kingdom. The monarchy's grant of Armenia to the Mhargrjeli provided an expedient way to secure the loyalty of this important military family; it also removed the burden of the administration of the newly conquered lands from the crown. The financing of a military through booty and land grants required the state to adopt a policy of near constant expansion, which the Mhargrjeli advised Queen T'amar to do. According to the HEC, they encouraged her to pursue continued incursions to the southeast so that her soldiers would not become restless.⁸⁵

As the new rulers of the Armenian lands they conquered, the Mhargrjeli faced the challenge of stabilizing their possessions and legitimizing their rule. The Mhargrjeli did not commission any text that addressed issues of legitimacy, rule, or administration, nor did they mint their own coinage. Our understanding of their notions of political legitimacy and administration rests chiefly upon their own monumental inscriptions and building programs. References to the Mhargrjeli in historical texts, epigraphic material, and colophons that reflect their governing ideology shed further light on their methods of political legitimization.

From the surviving evidence, it is apparent that the Mhargrjeli embarked on a program of stabilizing and legitimizing their rule through the deliberate adoption of royal lineages.⁸⁶ If the reading of an inscription written in Arabic letters from the fortress of Anberd, captured by the Mhargrjeli in 1195/6, is correct, the Mhargrjeli first claimed to belong to the royal Arcruni family of Vaspurakan.⁸⁷ Although there may have been some merit to this claim through their maternal line, this lineage does not appear in subsequent Mhargrjeli inscriptions.⁸⁸ The reason for the abandonment

however, the Georgian kingdom was subsequently forced to surrender the city, which suggests it may not have had sufficient resources to devote to its defense and administration.

⁸⁵ *K'C'* II: 103; *K'C'*-t, 470.

⁸⁶ Both MARGARYAN 1994 and ŠAHNAZAREAN 2001 likewise recognize the underlying political reasons for these two lineages propagated by the Mhargrjeli.

⁸⁷ See, TER-GHEWONDYAN 1971, who reads the inscription as: *Amirspasalar Zak'aria Ivana Arcruni*.

⁸⁸ Their mother, Sahakduxt Mahkanaberdci'i (DHV I:57 [171]), was the sister of Amir-Kurd, the emir of Tiflis, for whom an Arcruni ancestry has been claimed. MARGARYAN 1992, however, has dismissed the historicity of the Arcruni link. He notes that the connection

of this ancestry may rest in the fact that the other lineage they adopted, that of the Bagratuni, proved to be more effective, particularly after the capture of Ani in 1198.

The clearest and most fully elaborated expression of Mhargrjeli claims to legitimacy is apparent in the inscription of Iwanē on the western entrance to the narthex (*գաւթ/թ/ժամանակն*) of the church of St. Grigor at Halarcin commemorating its construction after the death of Zak'arē:

By the will of God who possesses everything, this is our inscribed memorial and everlasting monument of Iwanē and Zak'arē, sons of Sargis the Great, from the family of the Bagratuni, when the providence of God reached the creations and gr[ant]ed [us]⁸⁹ to rule over the proper inheritance of our forefathers; He granted into our hands first the impregnable fortress of Anberd and the royal city of Ani, then the forts of Bjni, Zmarand, Mič'k', and Gavazank' in Tabriz, the city of Karin until Xlat', Šak'i and Širwan, Partaw, until Belukan and many others with their districts which we reckon superfluous to recall here. And also God, who is unable to be angered, loved the crown of pride of my head, Zak'aria, and called [him,] through whom was my courage, to Himself. And I built in our paternal monastery of Halarcin this stone narthex with a cupola at the door [of the Church of] St. Grigoris; and I gave a vineyard in Erevan for the memory of my brother. And its ministers must offer a liturgy at the main altar for Zak'arē unhindered. May the executors of this writing be blessed by God.⁹⁰

between the two families is first explicitly asserted in the second half of the 13th c. with respect to Sadun Atabek Mahkanaberdci and may have served a similar legitimizing function. ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 45, likewise cites inscriptions left by the Mhargrjeli in which their mother is mentioned without any dynastic attribution. He further suggests, 46, that the Mhargrjeli abandoned any Arcruni claims after the failed siege of Xlat', which he dates to 1207 instead of 1209. They likely ceased propagating an Arcruni lineage long before that time as there is no firm evidence for their use of the association after 1195. The Arcruni lineage of the Mahkanaberdci's is upheld by TOUMANOFF 1963, 200, who, however, only mentions Sadun in support of this identification.

⁸⁹ See the note of the editors, DHV VI:24.

⁹⁰ ԿԱՄԱԿԻՆ ԱՎՍՈՒԾՈՆ>Յ ԱՅՍ ՄԵՐ ԳԻՐ ՅԻՇԱՍԱԿԻ Է ԵՒ ԱՐՁԱՆ ՄՇՏԸՆՁԵՆԱԽՈՐ ՈՐԴԵԱՅ ՄԵԾԻՆ ՍԱՐԳՍԻ ՅԱԶԳԷ ԲԱԳՐԱՏՈՒՆԵԱՆ՝ ԻՆԱՆԷԻ ԵՒ ԶԱԿԱՐԷԻ, ՅՈՐԺԱՄ ՆԱԽԱԽԱՄՈՒԹԻՎՆԻՆ> ԱՎՍՈՒԾՈՆ>Յ ԷՀԱՍ ՅԱՐԱՐԱԾՍ ԵՒ ԵՏ[...]. ՆՍՐԱՌԻՆ ՏԻՐԵՂ ՍԷՓԱԿԱՆ ԺԱՌԱՆԳՈՒԹԵՎՆԻՆ> ԱՆԵԱՅ ՄԵՐՈՅ, ԵՏ Ի ՋԵՌՍ ՄԵՐ ՅԱՌԱՋ ԶԱՆԱԽԻ ԴԵԱԿՆ ԱՆԲԵՐԴ ԵՒ ԶԹԱԳԱՌՈՐԱՆԻՍ ՔԱՂԱՔՆ ԱՆԻ, ԱՊԱ ԶԱՄՈՒՐԻՆ ԲՋՆԻ, ԶՄԱՐԱՆԴ, ՄԻԶՔ ԵՒ ԳԱՎԱԶԱՆԿ Ի ԹԱՐԻԺ, ԶԿԱՐԻՈՅ ՔԱՂԱՔ ՄԻՆՁԵԻ ԽԱԼԹ, ԶՇԱՔԻ ԵՒ ԶՇՐՈՒԱՆ, ՊԱՐՏԱՎ, ՄԻՆՁԵԻ ԲԵԼԿԱՆ ԵՒ ԶԱՅԼ ԲԱԶՈՒՄՍ ԻՐԵԱՆՅ ՍԱՀՄԱՆԱԻՔ, ԶՈՐ ԱԻԵԼՈՐԴ ՀԱՄԱՐԵՑԱՔ ՅԻՇԱՍԱԿԵԼ: ԱՅԼ ԵՒ ԱՆԲԱԳԱՆԱԼԻՆ ԱՎՍՈՒԱ>Ծ ՍԻՐԵՅ ԶԹԱԳՍ ՊԱՐԾԱՆԱՅ ԳԼՈՒՌ ԻՄՈ ԶԶԱՔԱՐԻԱ, ԵՒ ԿՈՋԵՅ ԱՌ ԻՆՔՆ, ՅՈՐՈ ՋԵՌՆ ԵՂԵԻ ԱՐԻՈՒԹԻՎՆԱ, ԵՒ ԵՍ՝ ԴԵՆԵՅԻ Ի ՄԵՐ ՀԱՅՐԵՆԻ ՎԱՆՔՍ ՀԱՂԱՐԾԻՆ ԺԱՄԱՏՈՒՆ ՎԻՄԱՐԻԵՆ ԿԱՄԱՐԱԿԱՊ Ի ԴԻԱՆ Ս<ՈՐԻ>Բ ԳԻՐԳՈՐԻՍ: ԵՒ Ա. ԱՅԳԻ ՅԵՐԵՎԱՆ ԷՏՈՒ ՎԱՍՆ ՅԻՇԱՍԱԿԻ ԵՂԲԱՐ ԻՄՈ: ԵՒ ՊԱՐՏԻՆ ՍՊԱՍԱՌՈՐՔ ՍՈՐԱ ԶԱՆԱԳ ԽՈՐԱՆԻՆ ՊԱՍԱՐԱԳԻ ԶԱՔԱՐԷԻ ՄԱՏՈՒՅԱՆԵՂ ԱՆԽԱՓԱՆԷ: ԿԱՍԱՐԶՔ ԳՐՈՅ ԱՐՀԵՆԱՂ, ԼԻՑԻ ԵՍԱՎՍՈՒԾՈՆ>Յ, DHV VI:22-24 (23).

The inscription underscores the three central aspects of the Mhargrjeli claim to legitimacy over their territory: Bagratuni lineage, divine support, and military conquest. This inscription represents the culmination of a decades long, cautious ideological program that transformed the family from members of the military to the legitimate heirs of the Bagratuni kingdom.

As Margaryan and Šahnazaryan have rightly pointed out, there is no evidence to support an actual claim of Bagratuni descent for the Mhargrjeli,⁹¹ but the gradual assumption of that lineage was ultimately successful to judge from inscriptions and colophons. The initial step in the process of identification with the Bagratuni appears to have been in the appropriation of Bagratuni titles. The earliest Bagratuni title that Zak'arē adopted was that of *šahanšah* (շահնշահ), 'king of kings', a title that had been first used by the Bagratuni king Abas II (914-928). If the interpretation of Šahinyan is correct, an inscription dated to 1195 on a *xač'k'ar* (cross-stone) erected at Koš by Petros *akanatēs vardapet* constitutes the earliest attestation of this title being applied to Zak'arē.⁹² The title becomes more commonly attributed to Zak'arē by himself and others in inscriptions after the capture of Ani in 1198.⁹³

In addition to *šahanšah*, Zak'arē may have adopted the title of *tiezer-akal* (տիեզերակալ), κοσμοκράτωρ, 'ruler of the world', if an inscription left by the wealthy and famous merchant Tigran Honenc' on the church of St. Grigor which he built attests to a more common usage;⁹⁴ it was certainly employed by Zak'arē's and Iwanē's descendants.⁹⁵ The epithet had likewise been ascribed to the Bagratuni kings, Smbat I (890-914) and Smbat II (977-990), the latter of whom established Ani as the capital of the Bagratuni kingdom, as well as others.⁹⁶

The Mhargrjeli reinforced this identification through repairing, endowing, and enlarging monastic complexes that had long been associated

⁹¹ MARGARYAN 1994, 157-161, ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 46-47. Šahnazaryan correctly observes that neither a family name nor any epithet associated with the Bagratuni appears in the inscription that accompanies Sargis the Great's tombstone, where one would expect such expressions of lineage.

⁹² ŠAHINYAN 1968, 201; see also MARGARYAN 1994, 159; ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 46.

⁹³ See the inscriptions at Ani: DHV I:2(3), 5 (11), 6 (15), 7 (17), 8(23), 14(53), 58 (172); at Hořomos, MAHÉ 2002, 182 (Že14). See also HŽP III:541.

⁹⁴ MARGARYAN 1994, 159-160; DHV I:62-63(188); see also the inscription at Getard, Yovsēpean 1969, 299 (app. 1.1); cf. the use of the synonym *ašxarhakał* (աշխարհակալ) in DHV VI:18 (21), 24(24).

⁹⁵ MARGARYAN 1994, 161.

⁹⁶ MARGARYAN 1994, 159-160; VA, 90 [=VA-t, 189 and n3].

with the Bagratuni. For example, they repaired and expanded the monastic complexes of Sanahin, Hałbat, Hałarcin, Hořomos, K'obayr, and Haričavank'. Nearly all of these had been well-known Bagratuni institutions. The monastery of Sanahin, one of the traditional burial places of the Kiwrikan branch of the Bagratuni, also housed the mausoleum of some early Mhargrjeli. The first prominent Mhargrjeli, Sargis, was buried there, as was his brother, Vahram, his son, Zak'arē, and his daughter, Nrjīs.⁹⁷ The structure of their mausoleum itself presents a picture of the Mhargrjeli appropriation of the Bagratuni heritage. The structure was completed in three phases; the first two stages of its construction were accomplished by the Bagratuni at the height of their power in the tenth century. The Mhargrjeli then superimposed their contribution to the building in the late twelfth century and appropriated it for their own use.⁹⁸ The assimilation of Bagratuni symbolism by the Mhargrjeli is also discernible at the church of S. Astuacacin (Holy Mother of God) built by Zak'arē in 1201 at Haričavank'. Over the eastern facade there is a depiction of Zak'arē and his brother Iwanē donating a model of the church to God. This composition mimics, with a change in attire, the depiction of the Bagratuni donor reliefs at Hałbat and Sanahin.⁹⁹ Zak'arē also founded a church within Ani, the former capital of the Bagratuni kingdom, and the brothers repaired the walls of the city.¹⁰⁰

The final step in the complete identification between the Mhargrjeli and the Bagratuni was taken by Iwanē in the inscription at Hałarcin cited above where Iwanē claims direct descent from the Bagratuni for himself and his brother. He asserts the inscription to be “an everlasting memorial of Iwanē and Zak'arē, the sons of Sargis the Great, from the family of the Bagratuni.” After listing all the territory that he and his brother had conquered, he refers to it as “the proper [*sep'akan*]¹⁰¹ inheritance of

⁹⁷ Iwanē, who had accepted Chalcedonism, was buried at the monastery of Plnjahank' as was his son, Avag; Zak'arē's son Šahnšah was buried at the monastery of K'obayr. See also ŠAHNAZARYAN 2001, 47.

⁹⁸ See KHALPAKHTCHIAN 1986, 372-3; noted also by MARGARYAN 1994, 161.

⁹⁹ On Bagratuni royal portraits, see JONES 2007, 35-45. Jones also notes, 45, that this iconographic tradition was not limited to Armenia, but was common to contemporary Georgian donor portraits as well. The Mhargrjeli portraits likewise not only hearkened back to the royal Bagratuni portraits, but also bore contemporary resonances in the Kingdom of Georgia. For example, in the donor scene at the church of Vardzia, King Giorgi III is followed by his daughter, T'amar, who holds a model of the church in her hands, reflecting the fact that the church was started by Giorgi and completed by his daughter, see EASTMOND 1998, 103.

¹⁰⁰ On the repair of the walls at Ani, see also above, 86.

¹⁰¹ *Ułqulqulwī* should be understood as designating both 'proper', 'one's own' property, as well as 'noble' and illustrious. In an inscription at Hałbat dated to 1210, Zak'arē also

our ancestors” (*սեփական ժառանգութեանն նախնեաց մերոց*). In other inscriptions as well as in manuscript colophons, the Mhargrjeli are referred to as the ‘kings of Armenia’ (*թագաւորք Հայոց*) and ‘from the race of kings’ (*թագաւորազն*).¹⁰²

The Mhargrjeli also employed the institution of marriage as another method of legitimizing their rule through a created lineage. It has already been noted that Sargis had married Sahakduxt Mahkanaberdc‘i, a possible Arcruni.¹⁰³ Even if the Mahkanaberdc‘i were not in the Arcruni line, the marriage testifies to an advance in the social standing of Sargis. Similarly, his daughter Vaneni was married to Abas II Kiwrikan, a descendant of the Kiwrikan Bagratuni kings of Lori who had been dispossessed by the Seljuks and the Georgians.¹⁰⁴ While this marriage would not have been enough to justify Mhargrjeli claims to a Bagratuni heritage, it undoubtedly strengthened them once made.¹⁰⁵ The Armenian historiographical tradition further asserts that Iwanē Mhargrjeli entertained hopes of marrying queen T‘amar and attributes his conversion to Georgian Chalcedonism to this matrimonial objective.¹⁰⁶ While it is clear that this accusation appears within the context of disparaging Iwanē’s conversion and may therefore bear no historical accuracy,¹⁰⁷ it nonetheless presents such a

refers to the fortress of Anberd, captured in 1196/1200 as ‘our proper [*sep‘akan*] fortress’, Łafardaryan, p. 168. In this inscription Zak‘arē also suggests that Anberd and many other fortresses had been ‘built by our ancestors’ (*ղշխնեալ ի նախնեաց մեր[ն]ց*). Anberd was built by the Pahlawuni family and one wonders if Zak‘arē also contemplated identification with that famous family, although neither he nor Iwanē ever explicitly claim that lineage. TOUMANOFF 1963, 208,n.236, asserted upon flimsy evidence that the family did belong to a collateral branch of the Pahlawuni; LIMPÉR 1980, 199, also rejects this thesis.

¹⁰² See the examples and discussion in YOVSEPEAN 1969, 6-7, and the inscription at Gelard, 299 (app.1.2); the inscription at Ani on the church of Zak‘arē dating to 1220, DHV I:57 (171); the colophon to M4509 dated to 1217, MAT‘EVOSYAN 1984,105. In their accounts of the siege of Xlat‘, most Arabic authors refer to Iwanē as king of the Georgians (*malik al-Kurj*), see, e.g., IBN WĀṢIL 3:201, SIBṬ IBN AL-JAWZĪ 1907, 2:540, NUWĀIRĪ 29:47, IBN AL-FURĀT 5.1:104.

¹⁰³ See above, n88.

¹⁰⁴ KG, 151-2. An inscription on a *xač‘k‘ar* (‘cross-stone’) on the bridge at Sanahin built in 1192 by her commemorates the death of her husband, King Abas, ŁAFADARYAN 1957, 185-86; YOVSEPEAN 1969, 7-8.

¹⁰⁵ This may have been further facilitated by the premature death of Abas II. A version of the *Chronicle* of Samuēl Anec‘i (12th c.) preserved in J3397 (undated) records that the death of Abas witnessed the extinction of the Bagratuni family, MC‘JSY 10:289.

¹⁰⁶ VA, 138 [=VA-t, 211]; KG, 166. The Georgian account of Iwanē’s conversion occurs in K‘C‘ II:81-90 [=K‘C‘-t, 450-455].

¹⁰⁷ We may observe that Ibn al-Athīr claims that the Eldigüzid Atabeg, Abū Bakr, married a daughter of the king of Georgia in 1206, IA XII:242 [=IA-t, III:113]. No Georgian source confirms any such marriage and it seems unlikely to have happened, but it is used by the author as one of many examples that depict Abū Bakr as an impotent ruler

marriage as a possibility and recognizes the Mhargrjeli's use of marriage to elevate their status. Three other sisters of Zak'arē and Iwanē also married with local princes to help solidify Mhargrjeli rule.¹⁰⁸

In addition to his explicit claim to Bagratuni ancestry in the inscription at Hałarcin, Iwanē invokes divine support in the conquest of the territories his brother and he subsequently ruled. Both faith and religious authority constituted important factors in the development of Mhargrjeli legitimacy. There is no indication, however, that the Mhargrjeli articulated an ideology of holy war, or that they justified either their rule or their conquests within the framework of a war against Islam, although others may have perceived their military successes in that way.¹⁰⁹ On several occasions they mention the taking of fortresses and of territory from the 'infidels' or from 'the sons of the slave Hagar',¹¹⁰ but these specific examples do not seem to have formed part of a more developed ideological program. Nevertheless, the expression of religious faith and the support of the religious authorities were essential for the successful tenure and administration of the territories they conquered.¹¹¹

I have already pointed out the restoration projects of monastic institutions the Mhargrjeli spearheaded or encouraged. The investment in these significant centers of spiritual guidance, pedagogical instruction and literary production undoubtedly helped curry the favor of local ecclesiastics and increase the prestige of the family. The Mhargrjeli also secured

whose Islamic faith was weak and thus bears a similar polemic thrust as the Armenian portrayals of Iwanē's desire to marry Queen T'amar. According to K'C' II:43-44 [=K'C'-t, 418-19], the Saltuqid Muza'ffar al-Dīn had converted to Christianity, much as Iwanē adopted Chalcedonism, in the hopes of marrying Queen T'amar, but she refused him. On other instances of marriage proposals and marriages between the Georgian monarchy and Turkish rulers, see below, n132.

¹⁰⁸ YOVSEPEAN 1969, 8.

¹⁰⁹ For example, on the *xac'k'ar* dated to 1195 at Koš mentioned at n92, Petros rejoices that "[ou]r land was [pur]ified and the Churches of Armenia were rad[iant]" (*Լսրբեցաւ երկիրս [մէ]ր և պայ[ծառայ]ցան եկեղեցիք Հայաստանեայց*) by the conquests of Zak'arē and Iwanē, ŠAHINYAN 1968, 198; Step'anos Orbēlean claims that "they liberated this realm from the bitter servitude of the Tačiks" (*ազատեցին զաշխարհս ի դանն ծառայութենէ Տաճկաց*), SÖ, 287. The monastic scholar, Vardan Aygekc'i, remembers in the colophon to his *Counsels*, composed in 1212 and preserved in J936 (MC'JSY 3:478), "the general who is persecuting the infidels" (*զորավար Հալածիչ անօրինաց*) in Greater Armenia, undoubtedly a reference to Zak'arē. See also MAT'EVOSYAN 1984, 39, 45, and the texts cited in n60 above.

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., the inscription on the *xac'k'ar* dated to 1200 at the monastery of Hałbat, noted above, n59.

¹¹¹ In turning to the ecclesiastical hierarchy for legitimacy, we may again detect an echo of Bagratuni policy as they were the first Armenian dynasty to be crowned kings by the Catholicos of the Armenian Church, YD, 139 [=YD-t, 128].

important ecclesiastical positions for fellow family members to insure the support of specific institutions.¹¹² In addition to the political advantages of ecclesiastical endorsement, Armenian endowment inscriptions of the late twelfth to thirteenth centuries indicate that the establishment of pious endowments functioned as a prominent way for the new elites of the Armenian territories to secure the inalienability of their landed property. As noted above, the security of land tenure deteriorated in the wake of the removal of the noble dynasts, but as the political power of the Georgian kingdom increased in Armenia, the new local rulers sought to assert the permanency of their acquired possessions.

The evolution in the terminology of endowment inscriptions illustrates well the need on the part of donors to stress the inalienability of their endowment. The use of the Arabic term *waqf* (pious endowment), which appears for the first time in a few Armenian endowment inscriptions from the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, reflects this concern.¹¹³ Our earliest known use of *waqf* in Armenian is in a donation inscription by Iwanē Ōrbēlean dated to 1173 at the monastery of Sanahin:

During the reign in Georgia of Giorgi, I, *spasalar* Iwanē Ōrbēlean, grandson of the great Iwanē *spasalar*, and son of Smbat *spasalar*, came according to the custom of our ancestors, to the monastery of Sanahin, to the Church of the Holy Mother of God; bishop Grigor Tutēordi was abbot of this monastery. I saw the memorial of our forefathers, that our entire region, both cities and villages, with nobles and peasants, had been given by the blessed kings and by our ancestors as a *waqf* for the Church of the Holy Mother of God, and sealed with curses. We, too, following our ancestors, again give our entire region with cities, villages, nobility and peasants as a *waqf* to the Church of the Holy Mother of God.¹¹⁴

In this inscription, the donor restores lands including villages, cities and their populations to the Church of the Holy Mother of God (S. Astuacacin) as a *waqf*. He also notes that they had been previously granted as a *waqf* by the Bagratuni with whom he claims relation. No evidence has come

¹¹² Thus, e.g., their nephew, Grigor (d.1216), was a bishop of Halbat, ԼԱԲԱԴԱՐՅԱՆ 1957, 52, and another nephew, Yovhannēs, became the director of the monastery of Halbat, ԼԱԲԱԴԱՐՅԱՆ 1963, 184.

¹¹³ Although the term *waqf* is originally Arabic, the Armenian transcription of the word in inscriptions, *vaxm* (MHB II:353), reveals Turkish mediation in the representation of Ar. *qāf* by Arm. /x/ instead of /k/ as in earlier Armenian transcriptions of Arabic. Similarly, the representation of Ar. *wāw* by Arm. /v/ may possibly be attributed to the meditation of Tk. I am unable, however, to account for the representation of Ar. *fā'* by Arm. /m/. For other spellings, see MHB II:228, 230, 245, 353, 354. See also XAČ'IKYAN 1960, 316-23.

¹¹⁴ ԼԱԲԱԴԱՐՅԱՆ 1957, 189 (184). For a discussion of the inscription and its political context, see LA PORTA 2008-9.

to light that indicates the Bagratuni designated the donation of lands a *waqf*, and the use of the term may represent Iwanē's own interpretation of an earlier endowment. It may be observed, however, that Iwanē employs the word *waqf* in Armenian transcription without comment, which implies that the term had been in use prior to this inscription and that its meaning was understood.

Whether or not the term *waqf* was present in the 'memorial' to which Iwanē refers, it is likely that the monastic brotherhood also presented Iwanē with a document or charter that formed the basis for the restoration of the donation as a *waqf*. The epigraphic evidence suggests that a written document, equivalent to a *waqfiyya*, in which the exact terms of the endowment were detailed, accompanied such inscriptions. For example, in the famous foundation inscription of Tigran Honenc', the donor lists what he is giving to the church and explicitly refers to a written document, a testament (*andarjagir*), in which the exact details of his endowment are specified. Without the corresponding Armenian documents it is difficult to determine how closely the inscriptions are related to their written counterparts, but at least in the case of Tigran Honenc', the list of properties and goods endowed could represent an extract from the *andarjagir*.

A contemporary example of an endowment charter similar to a *waqfiyya* is furnished by the charter of the Mhargrjeli granted to the monastery of Sanahin preserved in M3031.¹¹⁵ Although lengthier and more detailed than an inscription, the charter preserves the basic structural elements of an endowment inscription.¹¹⁶ It begins with an invocation of the Trinity, followed by an indication of the date of the endowment according to the prelature of the monastery; then the name and genealogy of the donor; the context in which the endowment was made; the details of the endowment; the proscription against anyone of his own people or foreigners,

¹¹⁵ Published in ŁAFADARYAN 1957, 55; I have not had a chance to examine the manuscript by autopsy. The charter appears to have been originally commissioned by Zak'arē Mhargrjeli, but executed, according to the emendation of ŁAFADARYAN 1957, 56, in 1214, two years after his death, and signed by his son. Łafadaryan's proposed emendation seems correct as the charter mentions the reign of Giorgi Laša, and Zak'arē's son witnessed the document instead of Zak'arē himself. Primary sources are not consistent on the date of Zak'arē's death. An inscription erected by Iwanē in 1213 at the monastery of Moro Joro, discussed below n158, suggests that Zak'arē had recently died. The scribe to M4509 (1217), MAT'EVOSYAN 1984, 105, asserts in his colophon that three years had passed since Zak'arē had died, but this may represent a rough calculation. A colophon to M1320 mentions the death of Zak'arē, but there is no indication of the date, MAT'EVOSYAN 1984, 79. Mat'evosyan dates the ms. to 1212 based on this notice. Historical sources record the death of Zak'arē prior to that of Queen T'amar in 1213-14.

¹¹⁶ Cf. MAHÉ 2001, 1326; MAHÉ 2002, 151-63.

whether of noble or non-noble lineage to alter the contents of the endowment; and the protective curses against anyone who may violate the terms and blessings upon those who uphold them. The document then provides a list of witnesses, with their rank and titles, and provides an exact reckoning of the date of completion according to the Armenian calendar.

We may compare to this document the endowment inscription of Zak'arē on his church at Ani,¹¹⁷ which contains a nearly identical structure: the inscription begins with an indication of the date by reference to the reign of Queen T'amar; is followed by the donor's rank, name, and genealogy; then by the details of the endowment; and concludes with protective curses and blessings. Only the introductory invocation of the Holy Trinity, the history of the endowment, and the list of witnesses with a precise dating are missing. Of these four elements only the list of witnesses is consistently absent from the epigraphic evidence. This comparison indicates that at least some endowment inscriptions and charters bore a very close relationship, and that such inscriptions may indeed represent extracts of charters.

Not all endowment inscriptions, however, contain such detailed descriptions of their endowment. The inscription of Iwanē Ōrbēlean, for example, would be better characterized as a summary rather than an extract of a written document. The reason for the detail in the inscriptions by Tigran Honenc' and Zak'arē Mhargrjeli at Ani may be attributed to the fact that in both instances the endowment described supported the working of an institution founded by the donor. Indeed, the inscription of Tigran Honenc' is a foundation inscription and not simply an endowment inscription.¹¹⁸ Iwanē Ōrbēlean's inscription, on the other hand, refers to the re-endowment of a monastery.

¹¹⁷ DHV I:58(172).

¹¹⁸ ROGERS 1976b, 70, who notes that the practice of inscribing extracts of *waqfiyyas* on buildings was exceptional in thirteenth-century Anatolia, as opposed to Egypt or Syria, speculates that such inscriptions may have served "to bridge the gap between the conclusion of the building and its declaration as a *waqf*." This does not seem to have been the case in Armenia, where the evidence is not entirely consistent. Tigran Honenc''s inscription definitely post-dated his 'testament'. Not only does he refer to the written document in the inscription, but he also refers to the rule of Zak'arē Mhargrjeli who had died prior to the time of the inscription. It seems probable that Tigran had the charter drawn up while Zak'arē was still alive, but the work was completed and the inscription inscribed only after his death. The wording of the inscription nonetheless followed that of the original charter, which would explain why Zak'arē is mentioned. The inscription was also 'updated' to include Zak'arē's son, the new ruler of Ani, in the inscription. By contrast, Zak'arē's endowment charter for Sanahin cited above was executed nearly two years after his death.

Another endowment inscription from the middle of the thirteenth century indicates that Prince Proš Xaľbakian bought the monastery of Ayrvank' from its owners and then endowed the monastery with all his private property (Arm. *mulk'* < Ar. *mulk*) as a *waqf*.¹¹⁹ E. Wolper has noted within the context of the endowment of Dervish lodges in Sivas that by transforming *mulk'* into *waqf* "the patron laid permanent claim to the property, rendering it inalienable."¹²⁰ Similar motives may be attributed to Prince Proš and Iwanē Ōrbēlean, who attempted to secure their claims to newly acquired properties.

The term *waqf* in Armenian in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had limited currency and was apparently used only with reference to endowments of land, including its people, but not to other types of endowments.¹²¹ More common than *waqf* in endowment inscriptions is the Armenian term *hayrenik'* (patrimony). Originally the term designated an inalienable inheritance of real property.¹²² Beginning in this period, however, its meaning expanded to also include lands donated as an endowment to be henceforth considered as the inalienable land of a church or monastery.¹²³ In other words, it took on some of the semantic import of the term *waqf*. Through the introduction of *waqf* into Armenian and the evolution of *hayrenik'*, then, donors emphasized the aspect of inalienability inherent in both terms with respect to their endowments and thus sought to stabilize possession of these lands.¹²⁴ The repeated use of the adjective *mštnjenawor* (everlasting) by the Mhargrjeli in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries to describe their monastic endowments similarly witnesses the donors' desire to underscore the inalienability of their endowments.¹²⁵

While these endowments helped the Mhargrjeli promote the legitimacy of their rule, the thorny issue of the differences between the Georgian and Armenian Churches remained. Iwanē's acceptance of Georgian

¹¹⁹ YOVSEPEAN 1969, 305 (app. 1.16).

¹²⁰ WOLPER 1995, 40.

¹²¹ The use of the term becomes more frequent in the fifteenth century by which point it had developed to include other types, see XAČ'IKYAN 1960; see also HŽP III:645, 649-51 on the proliferation of *waqf* and *mulk'*, as well as of other types of land holdings such as *iqṭā'*, during the Mongol domination of Armenia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

¹²² See TOUMANOFF 1963, 119.

¹²³ See HŽP III:554-55; BEDROSIAN 1979, 162; MAHÉ 2002, 177.

¹²⁴ The use of the Arabic terms *waqf* and *mulk'* also reflect the contemporary integration of Armenia into the regional economy, see below.

¹²⁵ Thus, for example, at Halbat (ŁAFARDARYAN 1963, 168); at Halarcin (DHV VI, 22-24[23]). In Zak'arē's charter the term used to express inalienability is *andairnali*, ŁAFARDARYAN 1957, 55.

Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, and Zak'arē's fidelity to his Armenian Apostolic Orthodoxy may represent an attempt to bridge that divide. Nevertheless, tensions festered within the army which included both Armenian and Georgian troops.¹²⁶ Based upon an examination of the Armenian historiographical record, Zak'arē Mhargrjeli's religious policy achieved mixed results in trying to negotiate a middle path.¹²⁷ Although he met local resistance to his reforms, he does seem to have garnered the support of the Armenian higher clergy in Cilicia. According to the thirteenth-century Armenian historian, Kirakos Ganjakec'i, the Catholicos was afraid that Zak'arē, too, might abandon the Armenian Church and accept Georgian Orthodoxy, and therefore acquiesced to certain of his demands.¹²⁸

The prominent and very public appropriation of a Bagratuni lineage by the Mhargrjeli undoubtedly created a sense of continuity, stability and legitimacy with regards to their possession of these lands, and in so doing transformed the Georgian conquest of Armenia into a restoration of the Armenian kingdom. But it also carried with it a high degree of risk, as the prior example of Iwanē Ōrbēlian showed. The combination of a Bagratuni identity and possession of Ani, the former capital of the Bagratuni and an important commercial post, constituted a potent symbolic and political basis from which to rebel against the monarchy. T'amar's father, Giorgi III, had deprived Iwanē Ōrbēlian of Ani precisely from fear of such a development, a fear that subsequent events proved justified. Given Sargis the Great's association with Iwanē and his role in suppressing the rebellion, the Mhargrjeli were probably well aware of the suspicions their activities could raise at the Georgian court. Such sensitivity accounts for Zak'arē's caution in assuming outright kinship with the Bagratuni family

¹²⁶ LA PORTA, "Re-constructing Armenia".

¹²⁷ VA, 139 [=VA-t, 212] and KG, 171-174 note that Zak'arē twice had to convene councils to enact his reforms and even then they were not accepted; in his *Chronicle*, Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i also asserts that the two councils ended without any resolution, MA-t, 104-105.

¹²⁸ KG, 177. In my opinion, Rogers has over-emphasized the religious gap between the Chalcedonism of the Mhargrjeli and the 'monophysitism' of the local populace, ROGERS 1976a, 319-20. One of his 'striking' examples for the dissonance between the two is the decorative program of Tigran Honenc's church of St. Gregory, "with a splendid cycle of frescoes unparalleled in any Armenian Monophysite foundation," 320. Rogers here seems to assume that Tigran is a Chalcedonian Armenian, although this is very unlikely, see the conclusions of MAHÉ 2001, 1329. Rather the decorative program of the church as well as the reforms attempted by Zak'arē point towards Armeno-Georgian cultural negotiation and hybridization, see LA PORTA "Re-constructing Armenia". It is undeniable, however, that the new cultural dynamics that emerged during this period were resisted by certain elements of society, and by some of the monastic clergy in particular.

and his remaining content with symbolic associations through titles and building activities. He was also careful to announce his faithful service to the Queen in several inscriptions¹²⁹ as well as to include the titles of *mandaturt'-uxusessi* and *amirspasalar* for which he was dependent on the crown. Such declarations undoubtedly aided Zak'arē in legitimizing his tenure of these lands as they clearly demonstrated that he derived his authority from a recognized power in the region. By comparison, one of the noticeable absences in Iwanē's inscription at Hałarcin is any mention of the Georgian monarchy. The death of Queen T'amar in 1213/4, the subsequent accession to the throne of her young son, Giorgi IV Lasha, and the internal discord following his enthronement surely encouraged Iwanē to assert more boldly his family's claim as the successors to the Armenian Bagratuni heritage and to portray his family's conquest of the area as a direct gift from God to himself and his older brother.

As in the case of the Mhargrjeli's fictive ancestry, these forms of legitimation carried regional resonances. The erection of an Arabic inscription by Zak'arē Mhargrjeli noted above indicates that claims of legitimacy based upon lineage were recognized and respected by non-Armenian subjects and rulers in the area. As the Mhargrjeli promoted their legitimacy through inscriptions, Islamic rulers in Armenia and bordering regions similarly used inscriptions to assert their titles, generosity, and faith, including curses against anyone who might destroy or change the nature of the donation or building.¹³⁰ Although the Turkic rulers who came to power in the aftermath of the Seljuqs do not seem to have claimed noble lineage from the royal families of Armenia, the Türkmen Sökmen and his descendants who controlled Xlat' styled themselves the Shāh-i Arman ('king of the Armenians'), thereby emphasizing their relationship to the local population; and the founder of the Dānishmendids of Sivas was identified as being of Armenian descent by contemporary Armenian

¹²⁹ See for example, DHV I:172; also BEDROSIAN 1979, 260.

¹³⁰ Artukid foundation inscriptions from Mardin, in particular, resemble those erected under the Mhargrjeli in structure and content; see the inscriptions in SAUVAGET 1940, 292-3 (no.4, 1186), 297 (no.12, 1206). Georgian awareness of and sensitivity to Artukid nomenclature and titulature is also exemplified in the enameled vessel known as the Innsbruck plate, which REDFORD 1990 convincingly argues was produced in Georgia. Several decades ago, Ettinghausen proposed that many Arabic inscriptions were not meant to be read, but represented 'symbolic affirmations' of the faith and of the presence of the ruler that bestowed a necessary legitimacy on the construction and the patron, ETTINGHAUSEN 1974, see also BLAIR 1998, 41-42. Many of the Armenian inscriptions undoubtedly functioned in the same manner, located as they are in difficult to read places, and sometimes covered up by a new construction only a few years after their production.

sources.¹³¹ While this heritage is clearly fictional, it may have been propagated by the Dānismendids themselves to legitimize their rule through the creation of a sense of historical and ethnic continuity. Like the Ōrbēlean and the Mhargrjeli, some of the new rulers often sought to secure their rule through intermarriage with Armenians, particularly of the ruling classes.¹³² The Shaddādid emir of Ani, Manūchihr, was born to an Armenian mother and married an Armenian Bagratuni princess.¹³³ As part of the negotiation for the release of Iwanē Mhargrjeli during the failed siege of Xlat', the Ayyūbid ruler of Xlat', Najm al-Dīn al Malik al-Awḥad, requested to marry Iwanē's daughter, T'amt'a.¹³⁴ Undoubtedly, this marriage was thought to enhance his political legitimacy as well as his military security.

V. THE GRANT OF ARMENIA AND REGIONAL PARALLELS

One of the noticeable characteristics of Mhargrjeli rule in Armenia is that the brothers enjoyed a large degree of autonomy from the Georgian crown, particularly in the waning years of Queen T'amar's reign and subsequent to her death. This autonomy cannot be explained through appeal to the traditional powers exercised by the Caucasian dynastic clans¹³⁵ as the family did not possess any inherent legitimacy, nor was the land they conquered their patrimony. Their offices and their land were granted to them by the monarchy and they were dependent on the monarchy for them. Any autonomous power the Mhargrjeli exerted therefore represents a concession on the part of the crown, either willingly granted or usurped. Nor can it be understood as part and parcel of the feudal relationship

¹³¹ See the account in Matt'ēos Urhayec'i, MU, 368 [=MU-t, 194]; cf. CAHEN 1968, 82.

¹³² Marriage alliances, of course, served diplomatic as well as legitimizing purposes, and there were attempts at marriage with the Georgian monarchy. See also above, n107 for the rejection of Muẓaffar al-Dīn. Rukn al-Dīn was apparently also later rejected by T'amar, *K'C'* II:94 [=K'C'-t, 458]; according to Ibn Bībī, it was the Georgians who proposed the marriage alliance, Peacock 2006, 134. In 1223 the Georgian Queen Rusudan did marry the son of Mughīth al-Dīn, the Seljuq Sultan of Karin/Erzurum, IA XII:416-17 [=IA-t, 244]. Her daughter T'amar was betrothed to the Rūm Seljuq Ghiyāth al-Dīn. On these marriages, see PEACOCK 2006, 138, 140.

¹³³ MINORSKY 1953, 81. According to Vardan Arewelc'i [VA, 123; VA-t, 204], one of his grandchildren, upon learning of his Bagratuni heritage, decided to become a monk; see also, MINORSKY 1953, 86. For other examples of intermarriage, see VRYONIS 1986, 176.

¹³⁴ KG, 165-6; MINORSKY 1953, 149-50; 155-156.

¹³⁵ See, e.g., ALLEN 1971, 107.

between the crown and the brothers. The application of ‘feudalism’ and related terms to describe Caucasian social and economic organization at this period is misleading. In addition to the inherent methodological impropriety of simply mapping terminology from one culture onto another, there exists the problem of defining ‘European’ feudalism in the first place.¹³⁶ Furthermore, important features of ‘feudalism’ are noticeably absent in contemporary Caucasian society.¹³⁷ This is not to deny that general similarities between twelfth- to thirteenth-century Caucasian society and some Western European societies are apparent, such as the militarization of society, the remuneration for military service through grants of land and administrative offices, and the weakening in the protective power of the state.¹³⁸ It may even be justified to compare the Georgian acquisition of Armenia, in which Armenia was treated as a separate and distinct entity, with European examples of ‘composite states’ achieved through union *aeque principaliter*.¹³⁹ As in the case of the Georgian crown, most

¹³⁶ On the varieties of feudal society see, for example, BLOCH 1961. On the inutility of the term ‘feudalism’ in general, see BROWN 1974, REYNOLDS 1994. Most studies that describe the period as the apogee of Armenian or Georgian feudalism consider it as a monolithic social construct. Charachidze is a notable exception. He specifically identifies the society that developed in the ninth-thirteenth centuries in the region between the Loire and Rhine rivers as his point of comparison to Georgian feudalism, CHARACHIDZE 1971, 15.

¹³⁷ On this question, see SUNY 1988, 42-43, and LA PORTA 2008-9, 155-8; with regards to the use of the term in Byzantium, see the cautious remarks of MAGDALINO 1997, 36. Although Charachidze maintains the parallelism between French and Georgian feudalism, he points out several differences, Charachidze 1971, 23-24. He notes that elaborate and established rituals of swearing and investiture do not seem to have developed in Georgia. More significantly, he recognizes that the Georgian feudal system lacked “la puissante armature que le droit romain, ou tout au moins ses traditions, ont fourni à la féodalité française.” He further observes that Georgia failed to establish the theoretical foundations that contributed to the development of feudalism in France, as well as “la belle et harmonieuse division de la société en *orantes*, *pugnantes*, *laborantes*, qui devait constituer l’un des fondements conceptuels du système.” In other words, though Charachidze does not assert this, the two systems emerge from very different legal and social matrices. Also absent is a strict hierarchization of society. Although the Mhargrjeli themselves granted land in return for service, there is no sense that they stood in between these land holders and the crown, and it was possible for these less powerful land holders to receive grants directly from the crown. For example, a certain Najmadin, son of Smbat, grandson of Uk’an, bestowed properties to the monastery of Halbat in 1211 that had been granted to his family by King Giorgi III and his daughter, T’amar ‘on account of our many years of service’ (*ჟამს მერ ჳამ დანნიჴესს*), ŁAFADARYAN 1963, 230-1 (130). Similarly, no network of dependency dictated relations between the Mhargrjeli and the remaining members of older *naxarar* houses.

¹³⁸ I have noted other parallels between Caucasian Iberian and Armenian social interaction with the contemporary Iberian peninsula, LA PORTA, “Re-constructing Armenia.”

¹³⁹ On European composite states in the early modern period, see ELLIOT 1992.

of these European monarchies sought an efficient method of stabilizing possession of their conquered territories.

In the case of land grants, however, the implicit and sometimes explicit parallels¹⁴⁰ drawn between Caucasian social organization and European feudalism obscure other regional patterns of development in land administration.¹⁴¹ In looking for comparative parallels, it seems *prima facie* more reasonable to compare the socio-political relationship that emerged from the concession of land grants in the territories conquered by the Georgian kingdom to other regional examples. To that end it may be worth noting that the nature of the land grant of the Armenian territories and the way it was held and administered by the Mhargrjeli bears a resemblance to developments in the Seljuq administrative grant, the *iqṭāʿ*, or the *iqṭāʿ-wilāya*.

C. Cahen and A. Lambton have noted the unprecedented widespread use of the *iqṭāʿ* by the Seljuqs.¹⁴² During the Seljuq period, and particularly as the strength of the central empire waned, the original *iqṭāʿ* model, as developed under the Būyids, of an equivalent for pay of short duration, evolved into an hereditary holding that granted its possessor, the *muqṭaʿ*, the authority to not only collect revenues but also administer his lands. The powers the *muqṭaʿ* exercised derived from a delegation of the sultan's authority and not because the *iqṭāʿ* was his private domain. He merely held the area granted to him as an *iqṭāʿ* at the will of the sultan and there was no obligation of protection upon the latter. On the other hand, the *muqṭaʿ* was expected to join the sultan on military campaigns when called upon to do so, and sometimes to support him with material resources. The *muqṭaʿ* was allowed to assign districts within his *iqṭāʿ* to others to administer, but private property continued to exist within the administrative *iqṭāʿ*-s.

We may notice a similar development within the Georgian administration. The monarchy originally allotted conditional land grants that accompanied particular offices within the administration.¹⁴³ However, under T'amar, both the offices and the holdings tended to become hereditary, particularly within the newly conquered Armenian domains.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, TOUMANOFF 1963, LIMPER 1980, 36-37, CHARACHIDZE 1971.

¹⁴¹ Cf. N. Garsoïan's comment regarding the comparison of fourth-century Armenian society with European feudalism by N. Adontz and H. Manandyan that despite the authors' meticulous analysis of the *naxarar* system, they were "largely oblivious to both the patent anachronism of such a methodology, and to the existence of a far closer contemporary Iranian parallel," GARSOÏAN 1994, 144.

¹⁴² The following discussion of the *iqṭāʿ* is based upon their observations in CAHEN 1953 and 1954, LAMBTON 1965, and LAMBTON 1988, 97-129 (esp. 101-108); see also AMITAI 2001, 154-6.

¹⁴³ *K'C' II:55* [= *K'C'-t*, 429-430]. Cf. also *K'C' II:72* [= *K'C'-t*, 444], where Amir-Miran is granted Šamkor and all its revenue, as payment for his help in the battle of Šamkor.

Similar to that of a Seljuq *muqta'*, the Mhargrjeli's rule in Armenia was dependent upon the Georgian monarchy. Undoubtedly the inscriptions of the Mhargrjeli recalled above wherein they declare their loyal service to the Queen functioned as a reminder of the ultimate source of their authority and legitimacy.¹⁴⁴

As Zak'arē was commander-in-chief of the Georgian military, it is not surprising that he participated in the military campaigns of the kingdom. The HEC records, however, several instances in which the Mhargrjeli were specifically summoned by the monarchy to serve in battle.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, it appears that the forces of the Mhargrjeli were responsible for military activities in the Armenian territories and often operated independently of the monarchy.¹⁴⁶ For example, at the disastrous siege of Xlat' in 1209, after Iwanē was captured by Ayyūbid forces, Zak'arē negotiated for his release and surrendered fortresses, freed prisoners, and granted Iwanē's daughter's hand in marriage for his brother's return. Neither the Armenian nor the Arabic sources indicate that the Georgian monarchy was involved in the planning of the attack or in the discussions concerning Iwanē's release. Similarly, after Ani was sacked by the Idigūzids in 1209, it is reasonable to think that Zak'arē led an independent force the following year all the way to Ardabil to loot that city in retaliation.¹⁴⁷ Finally, within their territory both Zak'arē and Iwanē allotted territory in return for faithful military service.¹⁴⁸ And similar to the perpetuation of private property within the administrative *iqṭā'*, we may discern the continuation of older families upon their allodial land.¹⁴⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that the Mhargrjeli usurped the rights of these traditional landowners.

The correspondences between the administrative grant of the Armenian territories to the Mhargrjeli and the administrative *iqṭā'* as developed

¹⁴⁴ See n129.

¹⁴⁵ For example, against the rebels who supported T'amar's first husband, K'C' II:51 [=K'C'-t, 426] where they heeded the summons of Davit' Soslan.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. the raids of Zak'arē and Iwanē noted in K'C' II:60 [=K'C'-t, 433], 'to pillage the banks of the Araxes' (მორბევად რავსის პირსა); also K'C' II:77 [cf. K'C'-t, 448n].

¹⁴⁷ K'C' II:100-103 [=K'C'-t, 468-470]. According to K'C', the Mhargrjeli advised Queen T'amar that they attack during Ramadan with a small force so that they would not be discovered. The dialogue between the Queen and the Mhargrjeli, however, is a literary fiction. I propose that it is a later rationalization that attempted to aggrandize the role of the monarchy; cf. LA PORTA 2008-9, 154-5, for another example of the idealization of the monarchy in Georgian and Armenian historiographic sources. The 'small' (მცირე) size of the actual forces deployed suggests that the Mhargrjeli commanded their own men independently of the monarchy in retaliation for an attack on their territory. The Armenian accounts of the raid ascribe the raid to Zak'arē.

¹⁴⁸ See the discussion in HŽP III:546-550, BEDROSIAN 1979, 259-62.

¹⁴⁹ YOVSEPEAN 1969, pp. 7-11.

under the Seljuqs do not indicate that the Georgian kingdom adopted this system of land administration from the Seljuqs or that the two were identical. Rather, I suggest that both the Georgian kingdom and the Seljuq sultanate responded in a similar fashion to the common problems of remunerating their military and administering conquered land on which traditional institutional structures of government had been severely weakened. We may observe a similar development in land allocations conditioned upon military service in the slightly later transformation of the Byzantine *pronoia* under the Palaiologan dynasty,¹⁵⁰ whose similarities with the *iqṭāʾ* have been pointed out by Cahen.¹⁵¹

Nonetheless, the application of a system of military remuneration through land grants in a manner similar to the *iqṭāʾ* and the administrative *iqṭāʾ* should be understood within the context of the wider recognition of regional political and economic norms and terminology.¹⁵² In addition to the terms *waqf* and *mulk* in Armenian inscriptions noted above, the word *kharāj* was used in Armenian and Georgian to designate a tax and tribute¹⁵³ and *ḥalāl* to describe profits that were legal.¹⁵⁴ We may also observe the issue of bilingual Arabic-Georgian coinage by the Georgian kingdom.¹⁵⁵ The Georgian word that is rendered as ‘homage’ or ‘honor’ in Brosset’s translation of the HEC, თაყუანის (*taquanis*), is possibly derived from Arabic *taqwā*, which designated not only ‘fear (of God)’, but also the social concepts of ‘loyalty’ and ‘obedience’, at least in the early Islamic period.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, an awareness of Islamic and particularly Seljuq administrative practices and nomenclature is evident in the titles and offices of *amirspasalar*, *vazir* (ვაზირი)¹⁵⁷, and *atabeg* (ატაბაგი), the last

¹⁵⁰ The debate over the exact nature of the *pronoia* and the chronology of its development is long; see KAZHDAN 1995-96; also AHRWEILER 1964; MAGDALINO 1997.

¹⁵¹ CAHEN 1971, 1090.

¹⁵² For other examples of cultural hybridization see, LA PORTA “Re-constructing Armenia”.

¹⁵³ See, e.g., *K’C’* II:99-100, 103 [=K’C’-t, 466, 470].

¹⁵⁴ I.e., not earned through usury, see MAHÉ 2001, 181; on the use of Islamic economic terminology see also the remarks of ROGERS 1976a, 320. We may also observe the presence of Islamic judges, *qāḍī*-s (Arm. *qumh*), at the court of Iwanē Mhargrjeli in Dwin, MELIK’SET’-BEK 1945.

¹⁵⁵ LANG 1955, 2; KOUYMIAN 1969, 107n120, 121; LA PORTA 2011, 105-106. Kolbas has concluded that Georgian and Seljuq silver coinage were complementary and formed “part of the same monetary system,” KOLBAS 2006, 81, cited in PEACOCK 2006, 140, see also Peacock’s remarks in n11.

¹⁵⁶ See BRAVMANN 1972, p. 116-118. See its use, e.g., in *K’C’* II:15, 33.

¹⁵⁷ For example, the *vazir* Antoni mentioned in *K’C’* II:25. The office was created by Giorgi III, ALLEN 1971, 260.

requested by Iwanē Mhargrjeli after the death of his brother, Zak‘arē.¹⁵⁸ The depiction in the HEC of David Soslan’s assuming the throne (*taxti* [ტახტი] from Persian, *taxt*) in Ganja after the victory of the Georgian forces over those of the Eldigüzid Abu-Bakr at the battle of Šamk‘or in 1195 illustrates well the degree of cultural and political hybridization that was attained in the conquered territories when the author exclaims, “the kingdom and the sultanate were conjoined” (მეფობისა და სულტნობისა ერთად მქნელობასა).¹⁵⁹

While the land grants bestowed by the Georgian crown and the administrative *iqṭā‘* were not identical in their administration, the observation of Ibn al-Athīr suggests that they were translatable. He recounts that the governor of Kars, a dependency of Xlat‘, agreed to surrender the fortress to the Georgians in 1206 for a large sum of money and an *iqṭā‘*.¹⁶⁰ As in the examples of economic and administrative correspondences noted above, mutually intelligible norms of land grants contributed to the attainment of a degree of continuity and stability across political and cultural borders.

The advantages of the administrative *iqṭā‘* system for the monarchy or sultanate are readily perceptible. The administrative *iqṭā‘* satisfied the cost of loyalties and reduced the bureaucratic burdens of the central authority. It also may have affected positive results for subject communities. As Lambton notes, political control was to some extent localized and resources were largely reserved for immediate communal concerns. Responsibility for security was placed on the *muqṭa‘* and, on the whole, satisfactorily maintained. Again, these phenomena may be recognized in the Armeno-Georgian instance.

There were, of course, severe disadvantages to the *iqṭā‘* system as well. The most pressing for the central authority was that it facilitated the emergence of autonomous armies and private pockets of power. Consequently, when the power of the central authority weakened, centrifugal tendencies towards greater regional independence increased. Such developments are perceptible amongst both the *muqṭa‘*-s and the Mhargrjeli. In the case of the kingdom of Georgia, we may detect not only increasing Mhargrjeli

¹⁵⁸ K‘C‘ II:110 [=K‘C‘-t, 474]. In an inscription at the monastery in Moro Joro dated to 662 [=1213] and composed shortly after the death of his brother, Iwanē already refers to himself as *atabeg* (აթაბეგ). The inscription was erected to commemorate Iwanē’s restoration of the Church of S. Astuacacin (Holy Mother God) in memory of his brother and for the longevity of his and Iwanē’s sons. YOVSEPEAN 1969, 7, had already noted that the use of *atabeg* by the Mhargrjeli may reflect a development towards greater independence as witnessed in examples from the Seljuq Sultanate. Cf. SURGULADZE 1973, 237-38.

¹⁵⁹ K‘C‘ II:73 [=K‘C‘-t, 444-45].

¹⁶⁰ IA XII:255 [=IA-t III:123].

independence from the crown with regards to their rule in Armenia, but also a strengthening of their role in the Georgian court. Thus, even before the death of Queen T'amar, the independent status of Iwanē's rule was asserted in an inscription on the church of S. Astuacacin at Noraduz;¹⁶¹ and as we noted above, after the queen's demise, Iwanē felt emboldened to legitimize his rule over Armenia solely upon the grace of God and his own, fabricated genealogy. Simultaneously, upon the death of his brother, Zak'arē, Iwanē refused the title of *amirspasalar*, and requested that of *atabeg*. This request is presented in the HEC as an act of humility on Iwanē's part, but given the power denoted by the office and the youth of Queen T'amar's heir, it is difficult to accept that interpretation.¹⁶² Two incidents reported in the HEC underscore the significance of Iwanē's role for the new monarch. As he and his brother had helped preserve T'amar's position on the throne, so, too, did Iwanē defeat a rebellion shortly after the young king's accession.¹⁶³ But the full potency of the Mhargrjeli family is made abundantly clear when the HEC reports that Giorgi Laša settled down and reformed his boisterous ways after Iwanē and his cousins threatened to withdraw their support for the monarchy if he did not. The young king evidently could not afford to take that risk.¹⁶⁴

VI. CONCLUSIONS

I have suggested above that the policies of centralizing power and land control by the Bagratuni and Arcruni kingdoms followed by their removal by the Byzantine empire, the temporary nature of the reorganization of the territories under Byzantine control, and the lack of a consistent land policy by the Seljuq sultanate resulted in a destabilization of political

¹⁶¹ The inscription notes that it was inscribed during the reign of T'amar of Georgia and the 'independent' or 'autocratic' (*ḥūpḥūlḥūl*) lordship of Iwanē and Šahnšah, the son of Zak'arē, DHV IV:19(31).

¹⁶² Cf. the remarks of SURGULADZE 1973, 237: "Die Atabagi waren bestrebt, sich die Funktionen des Mzignobartuchuzessi anzueignen und zum Rang des höchsten Beamten im Staat emporzusteigen. Dem Beispiel der benachbarten seldschukischen Länder nacheifernd, erhoben sie Anspruch auf das Privilegium der Erziehung der Königssöhne, das in Georgien den Mzignobartuchuzessi gehörte."

¹⁶³ K'C' II:152 [=K'C'-t, 481].

¹⁶⁴ K'C' II:155 [=K'C'-t, 483-4]. LORDKIPANIDZE 1974, 174, in trying to minimize the power of the Mhargrjeli, thereby also oversimplifies the situation when she describes the family as ordinary *eristavi* who submitted to royal power like the other *eristavi*-s: Но Мхаргдзели были не более как рядовые эриставов царя Грузии и подчинялись царской власти так же как и другие эриставы.

authority and land tenure in Armenia. The deterioration of the old landed aristocracy permitted the emergence of a new political and economic elite, comprised of members of the military and urban notables, which took advantage of the political vacuum and weakened status of land tenure in conquered areas to establish themselves. They sought to legitimize and secure their possessions through the adoption of lineages — created either by marriage or invention — and through pious endowments, both of which were promulgated by means of inscriptions.

Furthermore, much of the political and economic terminology adopted during this period indicates that Armenia was politically and economically well integrated into the region. The linguistic evidence is enhanced by similarities in forms of land possession and political legitimization between the Georgian kingdom and the Seljuq sultanate. In particular, the evolution in the Kingdom of Georgia of large land grants in exchange for military service mirrors that of the administrative *iqṭāʿ* in the Seljuq sultanate as well as, slightly later, that of the Byzantine *pronoia*. The presence of such mutually recognizable methods of legitimization, forms of land tenure, and administrative titles promoted the emergence of a regional political and economic system with a shared political and economic language that paralleled the contemporary literary and artistic culture. Through their appeal to traditional symbols of legitimization and through the employment of regionally applicable socio-economic structures and terminology, the new elites anchored their land and power both historically and cross-culturally. They thereby negotiated a measure of political and economic stability in the region despite the absence of a single dominant power.

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